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ABSTRACT

A case study of events involving the Beverly High School (Beverly, Massachusetts) circa 1860 exemplifies educational trends in mid-19th century Massachusetts. The hypothesis is that the political situation in mid-19th century Massachusetts was much more complex than has been suggested by radical revisionsts who tend to interpret educational and social developments in terms of social class conflict. The Beverly High School (which was abolished by popular vote in 1860 after two years of existence) was selected for study because it represents a means of investigating whether mid-19th century school reforms were the product of working-class efforts to educate their children (the traditional view) or were imposed on the working-class by upper-class leaders who wanted to instill their own morality and values on others (the revisionist view). Analysis of the debate over closing the Beverly High School and the ensuing vote to close it indicate that many factors, in addition to social class, played large roles in a more general way in educational reform in Massachusetts during the period under study. Most important among these factors were party politics, religion, occupation, attitudes toward state law (which, in the case of Beverly High School was important because the law required a public high school for towns the size of Beverly), and the age of the voters (younger voters were more likely to support public schooling than were older voters). The document concludes with comments delivered at a 1979 conference on community studies in urban educational history. (DB)

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FINAL REPORT ON NIE GRANT G79-0107:

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MASSACHUSETTS: THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE BEVERLY HIGH SCHOOL IN 1860

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Preface

This is the final report for NIE Grant G79-0107 on "The Politics of Educational Reform in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts: The Controversy Over the Beverly High School in 1860." Originally, the project was envisioned mainly as a statistical reanalysis of the vote to abolish the Beverly High School in 1860 in order to see whether the interpretations of Michael Katz on this issue were confirmed or denied by a more rigorous statistical test of the data. It soon became apparent, however, that the issue of the creation and abolition of the Beverly High School was much more complicated than indicated by the vote on March 14, 1860. As a result, considerable effort has been made to analyze educational developments in Beverly from 1840 to 1860 and has proven to be extremely useful since the issue of the Beverly High School from this broader perspective is quite different than suggested in the earlier literature. One problem, however, is that the scope of this project expanded. Therefore, though this is the final report for the NIE grant, I plan to continue to explore the larger issues of educational developments in Beverly in the future. Readers who are interested in this as an area of research should consult me, if possible, before they cite the findings in this report since by the time they read it, it is likely that there may be some modifications or updates in the interpretations offered in this report.

Portions of this research have been given at the Economic History Workshop at the University of Michigan in March 1980 and at a seminar on recent trends in American Social History at the University of Utah in August 1980. In addition, this NIE grant made it possible for me to prepare extended remarks on the papers delivered at the "Conference on Community Studies in Urban Educational History" at Teachers College/Columbia University in New York City in December 1979. Since these observations are being published in a forthcoming volume of that Conference, I have included them as part of the final report.

During the past ten years there has been a major change in the way educational history has been studied and taught. Radical critics of American education such as Michael Katz, Colin Greer, Clarence Karier, Joel Spring, Samuel Bowles, and Herbert Ginitis have argued that schools are oppressive institutions which regiment, indoctrinate, and sort out children in order to make them accept the existing, unjust social order.

The first major radical revisionist book was Michael Katz's The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts which appeared in 1968.[1] The book had a major impact on the study of educational history because of its particular perspective and its attempt to use sophisticated social science techniques to investigate American educational development. Even today it is still one of the most important revisionist studies available and its findings have become the cornerstone of most subsequent radical reinterpretations of our past.[2]

Michael Katz argued that mid-nineteenth-century school reforms were not the product of working-class efforts to educate their children. Rather, educational reforms were imposed on the working-class by upper-class leaders who wanted to instill their own morality and values on others. Public schools were seen by the elite as a means of producing docile and obedient workers for the emerging industrial society.

It is difficult to document the intentions of the school reformers or the reactions of the working-class to the educational reforms of the nineteenth century--especially since the average worker rarely commented in writing on the social events of that day. Katz attempted to solve this dilemma by analyzing the pattern of local voting behavior in Beverly, Massachusetts in 1860 when the town abolished its two-year-old high school. Using voter lists and tax lists as his data base, Katz concluded that the wealthy and middle classes supported the high school while the workers voted against it. As Katz put it:

> Contrary to the myth that views public secondary education as the fulfillment of working-class aspirations, the

> Beverly vote revealed the social and financial leaders of the town, not the least affluent citizens, as the firmest supporters of the high school.[3]

Though a few scholars, such as Carl Kaestle and Diane Ravitch, have now begun to question the validity of Katz's analysis of the Beverly High School, his interpretation has been accepted by most educational historians.[4] In fact, the vote on the Beverly High School is still one of the most important pillars of evidence in the radical critique of mid-nineteenth-century education.[5]

During the past seven years, Carl Kaestle and I have undertaken a comprehensive study of nineteenth-century Massachusetts education (NIE Grant NE-G-00-3-0068). We examined educational developments in that state from a variety of different perspectives using social science techniques of analysis. The results of our study have just been published in a book, Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts, which challenge some of the existing interpretations of the development and role of schools in the past.

In our analysis we examined the politics of educational reform in Massachusetts by studying the attempt to abolish the State Board of Education in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1840.[6] The State Board of Education under the leadership of Horace Mann was the major catalyst of educational reform in the Commonwealth in the 1830s and 1840s. Whereas most other historians have tried to analyze the support or opposition to common school reform using such indirect measures as the length of the public school year in the various communities, we were able to analyze this issue more directly by studying the pattern of voting of the representatives on the continuation of the Massachusetts Board of Education.[7]

Using information on the personal characteristics of the legislators (e.g. their occupation, age, number of years in the legislature, and party affiliation) as well as on their constituents (e.g. the extent of commercial and manufacturing activity within the district, the degree of urbanization, the per capita wealth of the area, its location within the state, and the religious orientation of the community), we tried to ascertain the relative importance of

each of these factors in accounting for the vote of the members on the bill to abolish the Board of Education. Rather than simply cross-tabulating the data (which does not permit one to look simultaneously at a large number of independent variables), we used multiple classification analysis.

Our study revealed a much more complex political situation with regard to educational reforms than has been suggested by the radical revisionists. Party politics and religion, for example, played a larger role in these debates and voting than acknowledged by Katz and other radical historians. Though manufacturing interests did play a role in determining the voting behavior of some representatives, they were by no means of paramount importance. As we put it:

> Other historians have emphasized the role of manufacturers and other capitalists in creating and maintaining the board of education. Our analysis certainly confirms that representatives who were manufacturers were more likely to support the board than were some other groups. But it is also important to remember that nearly half of the Democratic manufacturers still opposed the board. Also, rather than finding that areas with a high degree of manufacturing were distinctly supportive of the board, we discovered support for it from all economically developed towns in the state--those with a high degree of either commercial or manufacturing development, or both.[8]

Our analysis of the supporters and opponents of the Board of Education in the Massachusetts House of Representatives certainly challenges the radical interpretation of the politics of nineteenth-century educational reform. But the debate on the nature of nineteenth-century educational reforms, however, continues unabated. The radical historians contend that though the influence of manufacturers and other capitalists may not have dominated the struggle in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1840, it was certainly evident at the local level. The case of the Beverly High School is inevitably cited as conclusive empirical verification of the radical interpretation of nineteenth-century educational reforms.

Rather than speaking past each other in these debates by drawing upon different bodies of evidence, I propose to re-examine in this study the "reform by imposition" hypothesis by re-analyzing the pattern of voting on the decision

of the town meeting to abolish the Beverly High School in 1860. The analysis by Katz was an important pioneering effort to bring new social science techniques into the analysis of educational history, but from our perspective today it is simply too crude statistically to make adequate inferences about the relative importance of various factors in determining one's vote on this issue. By only cross-tabulating his data, Katz was unable to discover the relative importance of each of the personal characteristics of the voter in determining his position on this controversial issue. Whether occupational class or the wealth of the individual were really better predictors of voting behavior than in what section of the town the person resided is not at all clear in Katz's analysis. In addition, Katz did not place the entire controversy within Beverly within the broader perspective of educational developments in that community. As a result, we do not get the proper sense of the alternatives facing that community as it tried to deal with its educational system during the ante-bellum period.

I. Educational Developments in Ante-Bellum Beverly

One of the major problems in understanding the nature of educational development in the past is that scholars have not specified exactly what they mean by each of those terms. Often the development of common schools is confused with other educational reforms or inappropriately linked to some individual educational reformer. A common practice is to link educational development and reforms in Massachusetts with Horace Mann becoming the first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837. Thus, Bowles and Gintis assert:

> Rapid growth in attendance paralleled these dramatic changes in the legal, financial and social structure of U.S. education. Twenty years before the Civil War, just under 38 percent of white children aged five-nineteen were attending schools. By 1860, the figure had risen to 59 percent. Thus the few decades of educational change, which may be dated from Horace Mann's ascendancy to the newly created Massachusetts State Board of

Education in 1837, marked a major turning point in U.S. social history.[9]

The problem with this analysis, as with many others, is that is confuses several different issues. Education did rise between 1840 and 1860 in terms of school enrollment, but most of that increase was in the other parts of the country and not New England. In Massachusetts, for example, the percentage of children ages 0-19 enrolled in all schools actually decined from 67.4 percent in 1839-40 to 56.8 percent in 1859-60.[10] Furthermore, Horace Mann's reforms in the period of the late 1830s and 1840s did not really increase common school enrollments--they had already been quite high before he assumed office. Thus, if one is concerned about the origins of mass education in Massachusetts, one needs to look well before 1800 to find it in terms of school enrollment.[11] Therefore, any simplistic attempts to link the origins of schooling in Massachusetts with the rise of industrial capitalism must resolve the problem that they do not appear to have even coincided in terms of timing.

Similarly, Alexander Field in a recent article has tried to link the length of the public school year with the support of Horace Mann's educational reforms. Though this is an interesting effort, it never establishes that the length of the public school year is really highly correlated with either support or opposition to Horace Mann's reform efforts. In fact, Kaestle and I found in our analysis of the Massachusetts Legislature in 1840, that there was barely any relationship what-so-ever between the length of the public school year in a community and the likelihood of that representative to support the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.[12] Thus, while it is certainly desirable and important to study the variations in the length of the public school year, it does not necessarily provide us with much insight into the dynamic of educational reform in Massachusetts as defined by Horace Mann's activities.

Perhaps part of the confusion that stems from Katz's Irony of Early School Reform is that he often equates popular education with the rise of the high school. In trying to demonstrate that workers did not initiate or support popular education

in mid-nineteenth-century Massachusetts, he focuses his attention to the efforts to create and then abolish the High School in Beverly, Massachusetts in the late 1850s. Yet he should have addressed the question of whether the creation of the high school in ante-bellum Massachusetts is really what most people meant when they spoke of educacional developments and reforms. Certainly some of them addressed this issue, but most of the public concern about education as well as that of educational reformers was not concentrated on the high schools but on the common schools. Therefore, even if the workers in Beverly unanimously opposed the creation of a high school, it would not necessarily tell us anything about their attitudes and behavior toward popular education in the form of common schools. In fact, it might be that many people favored the expansion of public education at the common school level but opposed the high cost of maintaining high schools for a few individuals. In this situation, would it be correct to say that the people opposed popular education simply because they opposed the high school?

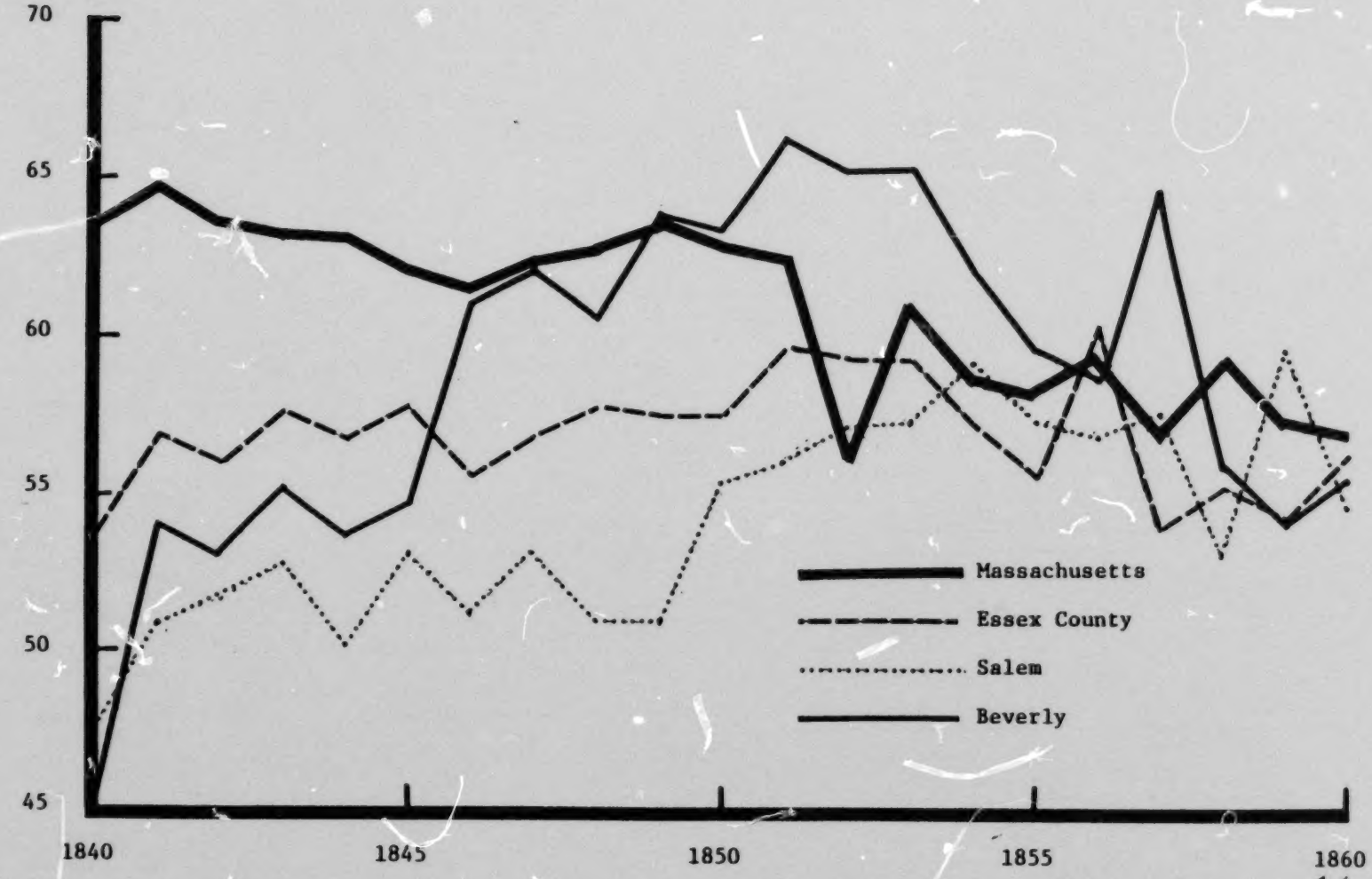
In order to present a broader and a more balanced picture of the reactions of Beverly citizens to education in the two decades before the Civil War, I will try to sketch some of the broader trends in educational developments in that community before dealing with the issue of the high school. In order to make this work more comparative, I will compare and contrast educational trends in Beverly with those in Massachusetts, Essex County, and Salem. In this way we will have a better idea of the relative trend in educational developments in Beverly and see exactly how the citizens of that community dealt with this important aspect of their town.

Most historians have simply assumed that the percentage of persons ages 0-19 enrolled in public and private schools in Massachusetts rose dramatically from 1840 to 1860 as the result of Horace Mann's efforts. The actual trends, as first pointed out by Albert Fishlow, are quite different.[13] The percentage of children ages 0-19 declined from 63.7 percent in 1839-40 to 56.8 percent in 1859-60--an overall decline of 10.8 percent (see figure 1).

Insert Figure 1

Figure 1

Percentage of Persons Under 20 Years of Age
Enrolled in Schools, 1840-1860



In Essex County, the percentage of persons ages 0-19 enrolled in all schools gradually rose from 55.0 percent in 1839-40 to 60.2 percent in 1855-56 and then declined to 56.2 percent in 1859-60. Overall, while the percentage of children under twenty enrolled in schools declined in Massachusetts, it remained relatively stable in Essex County.

In both Beverly and Salem, the percentage of children ages 0-19 enrolled increased. In Beverly, the percentage increased from 46.6 percent in 1839-40 to 55.4 percent in 1859-60--a rise of 18.9 percent. In the larger seaport community of Salem across the bay, the percentage of persons ages 0-19 enrolled in all schools rose from 47.0 percent in 1839-40 to 54.4 percent in 1859-60 --an almost identical rise to that in Beverly. Thus, while the rates of school enrollment in Massachusetts declined and those in Essex County remained steady, both Beverly and Salem experienced sizable increases so that on the eve of the Civil War the rates at all four levels were almost identical.

It is difficult to account for these trends, particularly since the quality of the data on school enrollment is not always trustworthy.[14] Nevertheless, it appears that a large part of the decrease in the rate of school enrollment in the state is the result of the decrease of four and five year-olds in attending schools as the fears of phyically and mentally damaging very young children by prematurely educating them spread throughout the Commonwealth.[15] Since very young children were more likely to be found attending school in 1839-40 in Massachusetts or Essex County than in either Beverly or Salem, the elimination of these children from the schools would reduce enrollment rates in the state and county more than in the latter two communities.

While the percentage of enrolled students rose in Salem and Beverly during these years, there was also a significant change in the proportion of them receiving their education from private schools. Horace Mann and other reformers put great emphasis on getting local communities to improve their common school facilities so that parents would send their children to public rather than to private schools. In Beverly, the percentage of all students enrolled in private schools dropped dramatically from 23.5 percent in 1839-40 to only 4.5 percent in 1859-60 (see figure 2). While the percentage of students

in private schools in Salem were always quite high compared to the other communities, they also dropped in that town from 30.9 percent of all enrolled students in 1839-40 to 18.7 percent in 1859-60. Though the decline in relative private school enrollments were less drastic in the state than in Beverly, Salem, or Essex County, it also decreased from 12.9 percent to 8.0 percent during this period.

Insert Figure 2

In the sense of encouraging families to send their children to public rather than to private schools, the reform effort of Horace Mann and others was quite successful--especially in communities such as Beverly where previously nearly a quarter of the children were in private schools but by the eve of the Civil War the over-whelming majority went to public schools. The shift of the control of such a large part of education in the community from private hands to those of the town school committee and local districts was an important event that has gone unnoticed in the historical discussions of the debates over public education in Beverly.

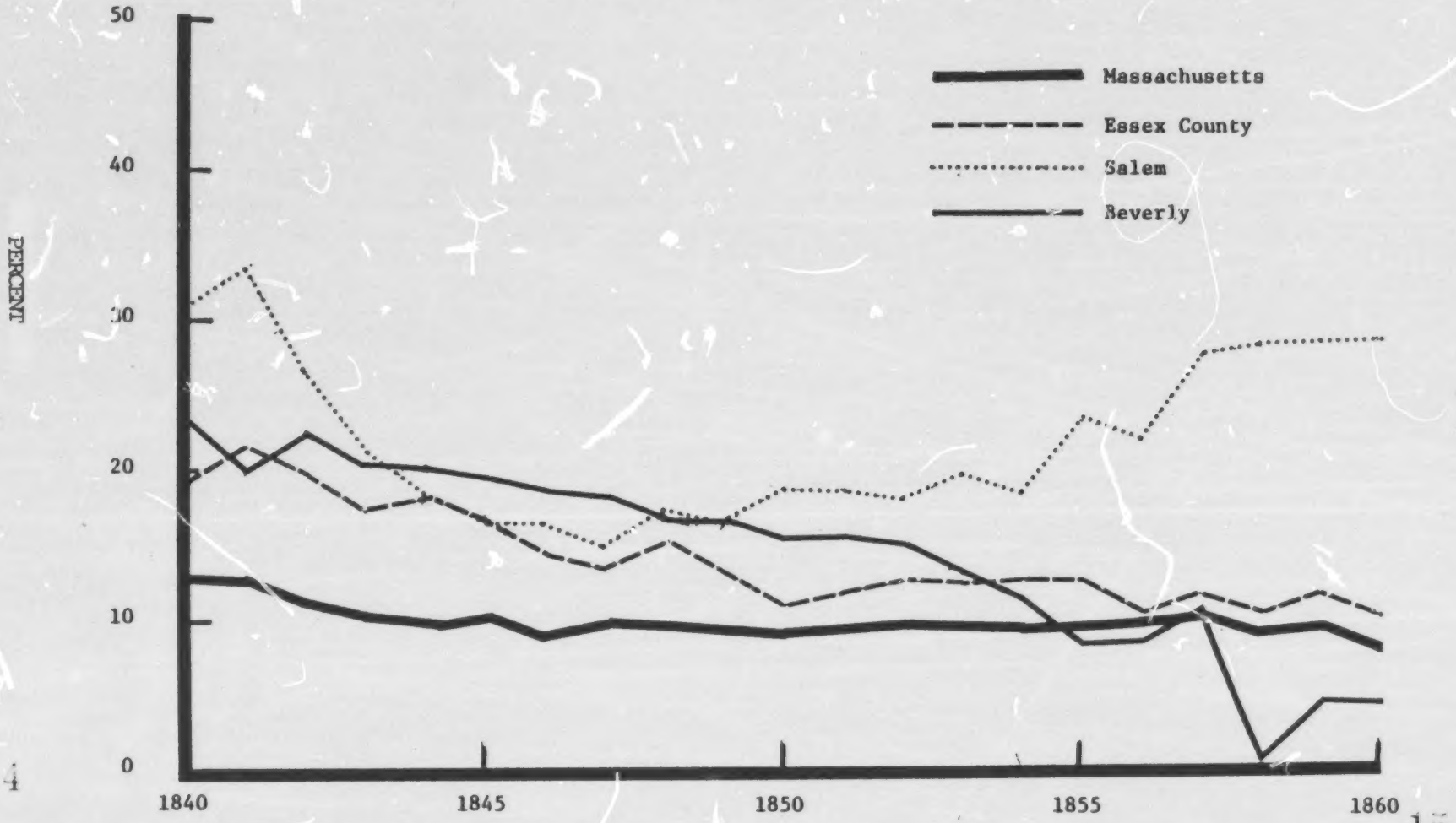
The shift to more public education in Beverly did not only mean more public control of education, but also a shift in the costs of that education from the families of the private school children to the town as a whole. Interestingly, one does not find any evidence of protests or opposition in Beverly to this important change in education from private to public hands. If many of the residents of Beverly did not support a public high school in 1860, the majority of them either agreed or acquiesed in the major shift from private to public education despite the increased tax burden for all of them.

Having considered trends in total rates of enrollment and in the proportion in private schools among persons under twenty, we should now analyze the average daily public and private school attendance. Though enrollment rates give us an idea of how many children benefited at some point from schooling, the rates of average daily attendance provide a more accurate picture of how much education children on the average received each year.

In Beverly, the percentage of children under twenty daily attending school

Figure 2

Percent of Total Annual School Enrollment in Private Schools, 1840-1860



gradually rose from 29.4 percent in 1839-40 to 42.2 percent in 1850-51 and then steadily, but erratically, declined to 33.0 percent in 1859-60 (see figure 3). Overall, the average daily rate of school attendance in Beverly rose by 12.2 percent during these two decades--somewhat slower than the 18.9 percent growth in the enrollment rate during the same period. Interestingly, the average daily rate of school attendance was lower in Beverly in 1859-60 than in Massachusetts, Essex County, or Salem.

Insert Figure 3

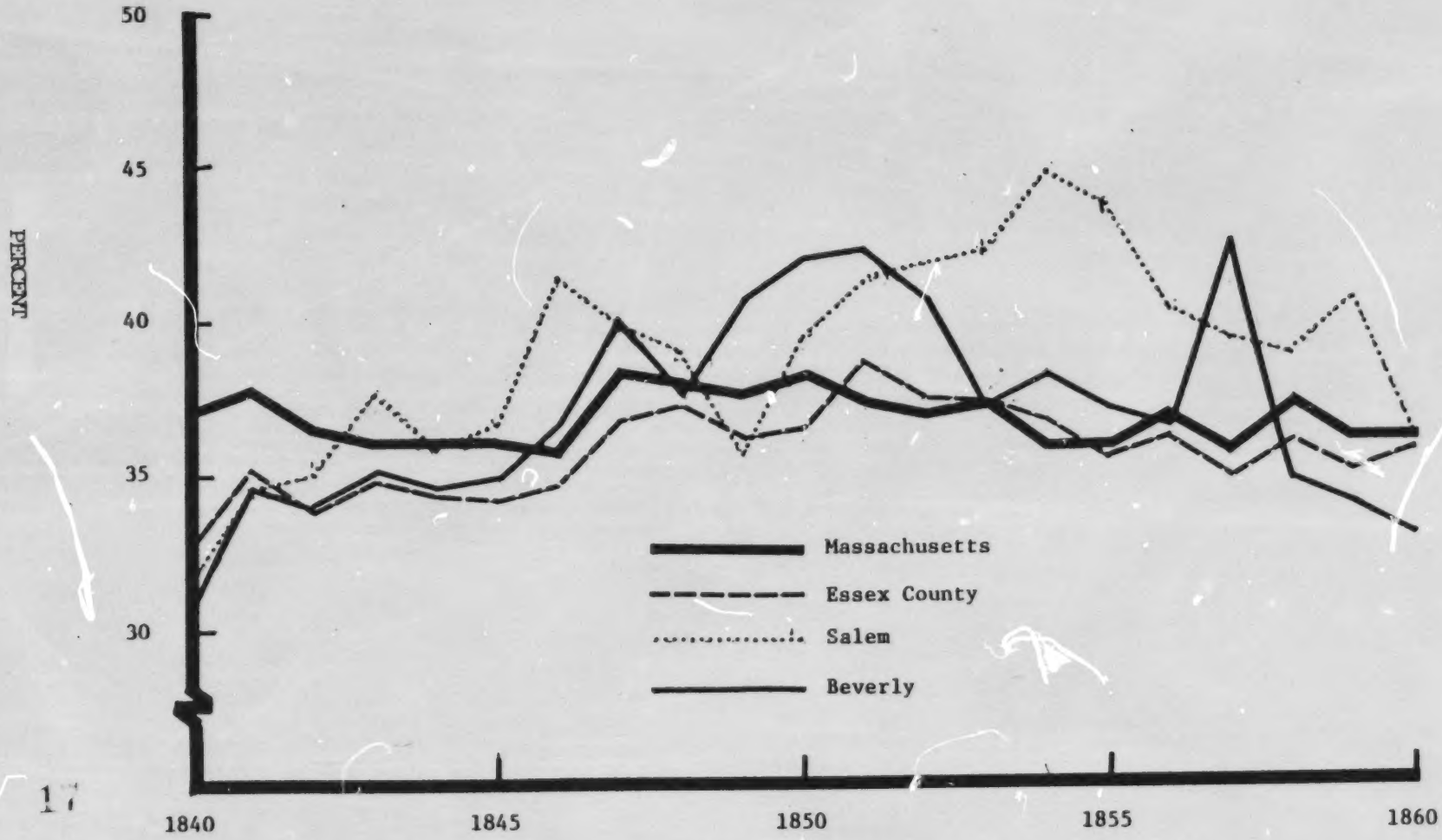
Children under twenty in Beverly, for example, daily attended school 8.1 percent less than their counterparts in Salem. Since the rates of school enrollment were almost identical, the difference between the two communities was that Salem pupils were considerably more regular in their attendance than Beverly students. Thus, though the citizens of Beverly had made major improvements in increasing the rates of school enrollment of their children and increasingly used public rather than private schools, they had not succeeded in inculcating their students to attend school as regularly as those in Massachusetts, Essex County, or Salem.

The average daily attendance rate of pupils gives us only one perspective on the amount of education children received in ante-bellum Massachusetts. The other crucial piece of information we need is the average length of the school year. Though we do not have annual information on the length of the private school year (though we can make estimates), we do have data on the average length of the public school year.

The average length of the public school year in Beverly increased from 195 days in 1839-40 to 203 days in 1858-59--an increase of 4.1 percent (insert figure 4).[16] In Salem, on the other hand, the average length of the public school year declined from 264 days in 1840-41 to 253 days in 1859-60--a decline of 4.2 percent.[17] Thus, though there was some convergence between the length of the school year in Beverly and Salem, Salem continued to provide much more education for its children than Beverly. On the other hand, Beverly was providing as much education as Essex County and considerably more than the state

Figure 3

Average Daily Public and Private Attendance as a
Percentage of All Children Ages Birth to 19, 1840-1860



as a whole.

Insert Figure 4

In light of Alexander Field's focus on the length of the public school year as an index of the interest in education in a community, it is interesting to note that Beverly, by that criteria, displayed as much interest in education as the rest of the county, but much less than Salem. Since the length of the public school year in Salem was decreasing while it was increasing in Beverly, one could argue that there was a major reversal in emphasis in these two communities. However, I suspect that the length of the school year is not as good an index of interest in education that it would permit such fine speculation. In part the differences in school year may reflect the different types of economies within the community with Salem, an urban area, providing year-round education whereas Beverly, with certain portions still heavily agricultural, might vary the length of the school year in order to permit children to work in the fields during certain periods when agricultural work was in high demand.

The net result of the average daily attendance and the average length of the school year provides us with an estimate of the average number of days of public or private school attended annually per person under twenty years of age. In Beverly, the average number of days of school per person under twenty increased dramatically from 59.1 days in 1839-40 to 78.4 days in 1859-60--an overall increase of 32.7 percent (insert figure 5). This is particularly impressive compared to Salem which witnessed only a rise from 87.0 days in 1839-40 to 91.7 days in 1859-60--an increase of 5.4 percent. Thus, the children in Beverly made major gains in the amount of education they received during the ante-bellum period--though they continued to trail the educationally advanced communities such as Salem in the overall amount of education.

Insert Figure 5

The information on enrollment, attendance, length of public school year,

Figure 4

Length of Public School Sessions in Days, 1840-1860

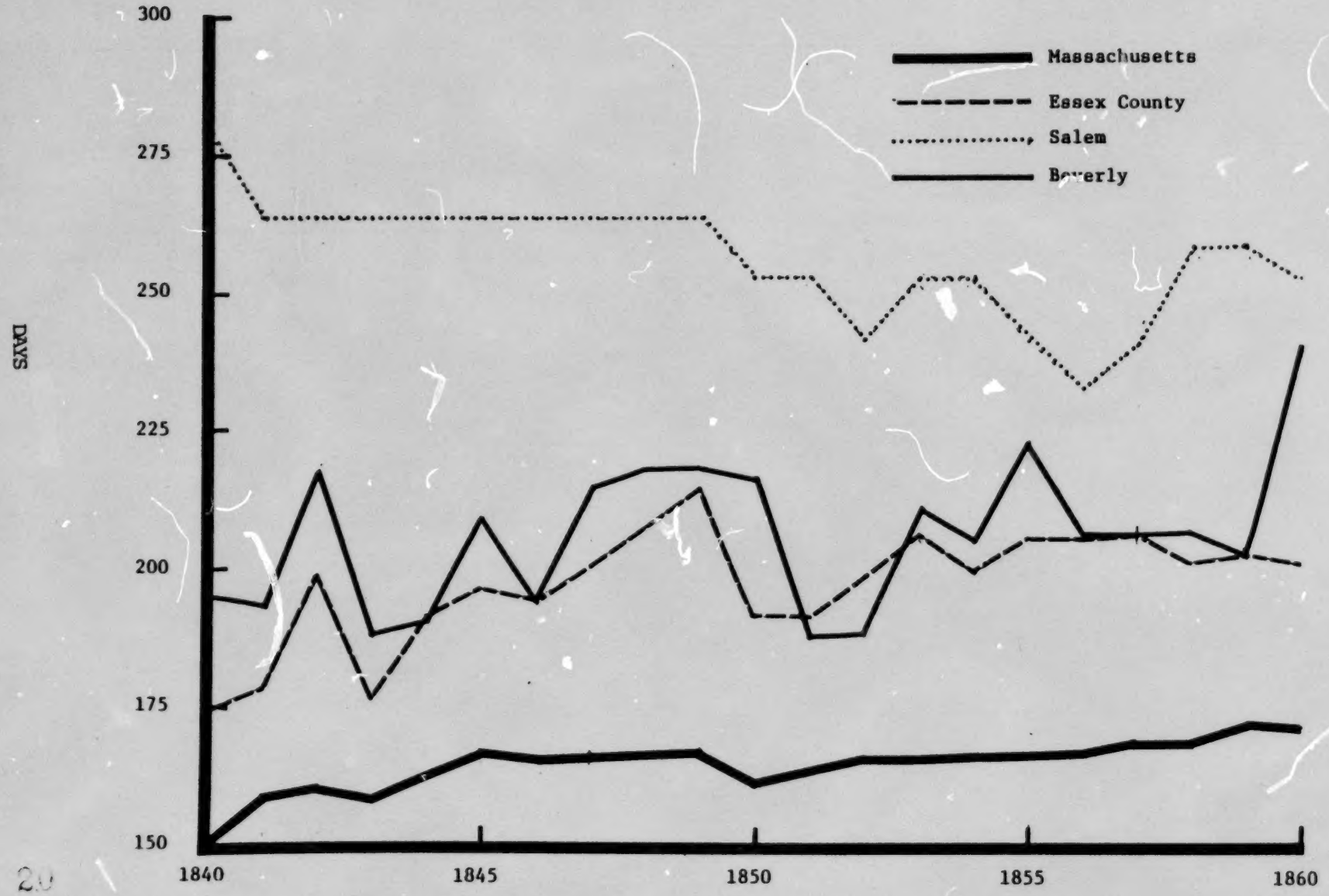
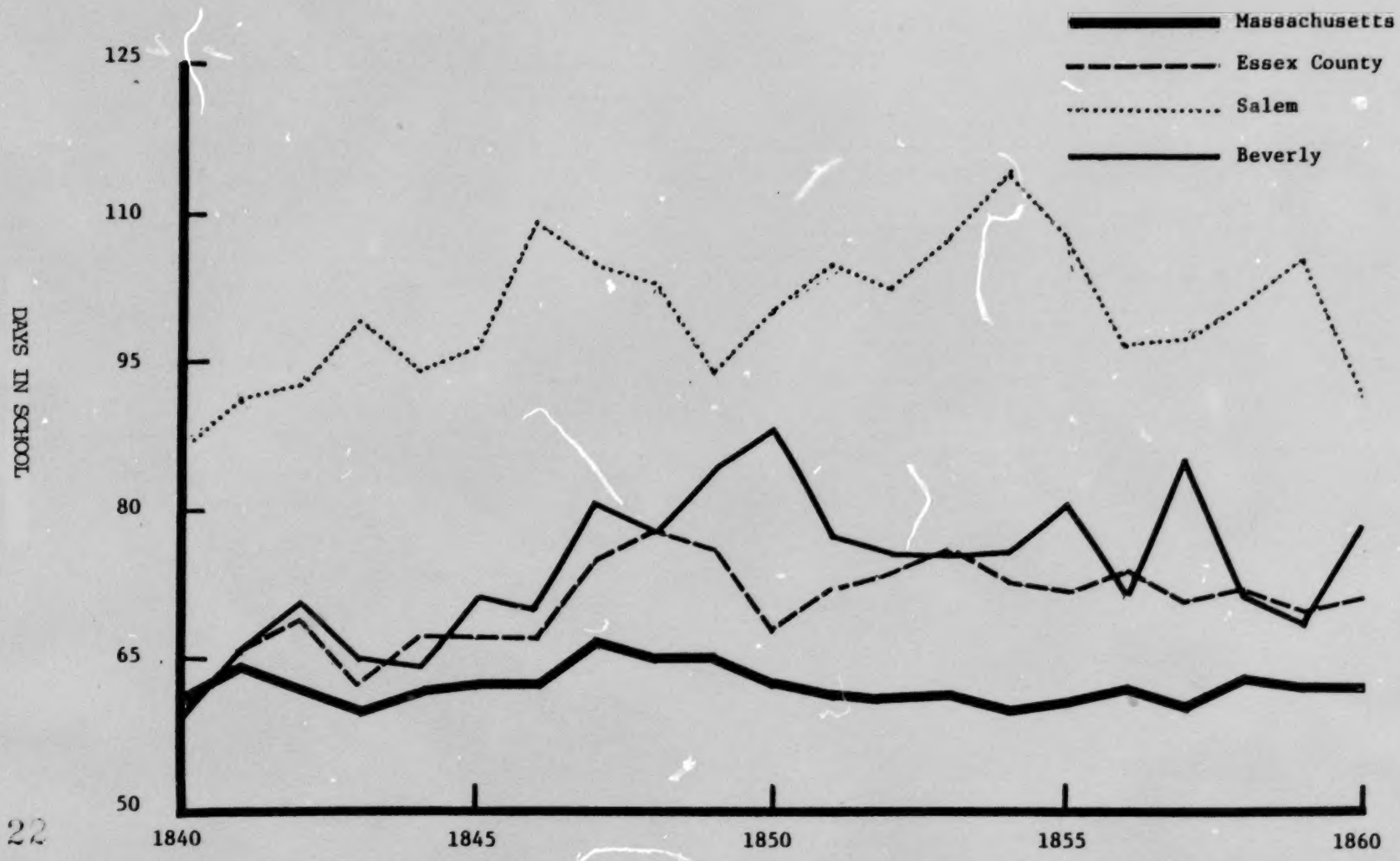


Figure 5

Average Number of Days of Public or Private School
Attended Per Person Under 20 Years of Age, 1840-1860



and amount of education received per child indicate that Beverly was making important gains in the two decades before the Civil War though it had not caught up with school systems in communities such as Salem which were also making gains during these same years. This picture of education does suggest that the citizens of Beverly worked hard to upgrade its offering of public education and to encourage their own children to attend school in higher proportions than ever before. If they did not respond enthusiastically to supporting a public high school, they certainly did endorse public education for everyone at the common school level.

To understand the reactions of Beverly citizens to the expansion of public education in that community, we need to consider the costs of this process. The cost of public schools in Beverly rose in real dollars (1860=100) from $2717.88 in 1840 to $6152.56 in 1860--a huge increase of 126.4 percent.[18] The citizens of Beverly responded to the pleas of Horace Mann and local citizens for improved public education by a major increase in spending for that system. Thus, in evaluating the support or lack of support for popular education in Beverly, we need to remember that the taxpayers of that community supported a major expansion of that system even though it meant increasing per capita costs of public education in real dollars from $ .59 to $1.04--an impressive increase of 76.3 percent during the two decades before the Civil War.

The citizens of Beverly accepted a higher rate of per capita taxation to fund the expansion of public school education. But did this occur within the context of a general expansion of the economy and how did their expenditures compare to those of their counterparts in the Commonwealth? To answer these questions, we can calculate the amount of school expenditures, public and private, per $1000 of valuation. This will give us an indication of the relative economic burden of education in the ante-bellum period.

Though the per capita costs of public education soared in Beverly, the overall burden of public and private education as a share of taxable property in that community declined from $3.84 per $1000 of valuation to $2.30 per $1000 of valuation (see figure 6). It is important to observe, that while Beverly lagged behind Salem in the length of the public school year and the

annual number of days of school per person under twenty, it usually spent a larger proportion of its taxable property for educational purposes than Salem. In other words, while Beverly does not seem as committed to education as Salem if we look only at the indices of the amount of education supplied and received in each community, the picture is just the reverse if we look at the relative economic ability of each town to finance education.

Insert Figure 6

As we note the decline in the total school expenditures in Beverly as a percentage of taxable wealth, we may be surprised by the outrage of many taxpayers toward a new public high school. Yet another perspective on this issue may provide some clues to the concerns of the taxpayers. While the overall school expenditures per $1000 valuation declined, the share of public school expenditures significantly increased. Public school expenditures rose from $1.70 per $1000 valuation in 1839-40 to $2.15 per $1000 valuation in 1859-60--an overall increase of 26.5 percent. Thus, though the relative economic burden of education in Beverly decreased for the families with school-age children, it significantly increased for all Beverly taxpayers.

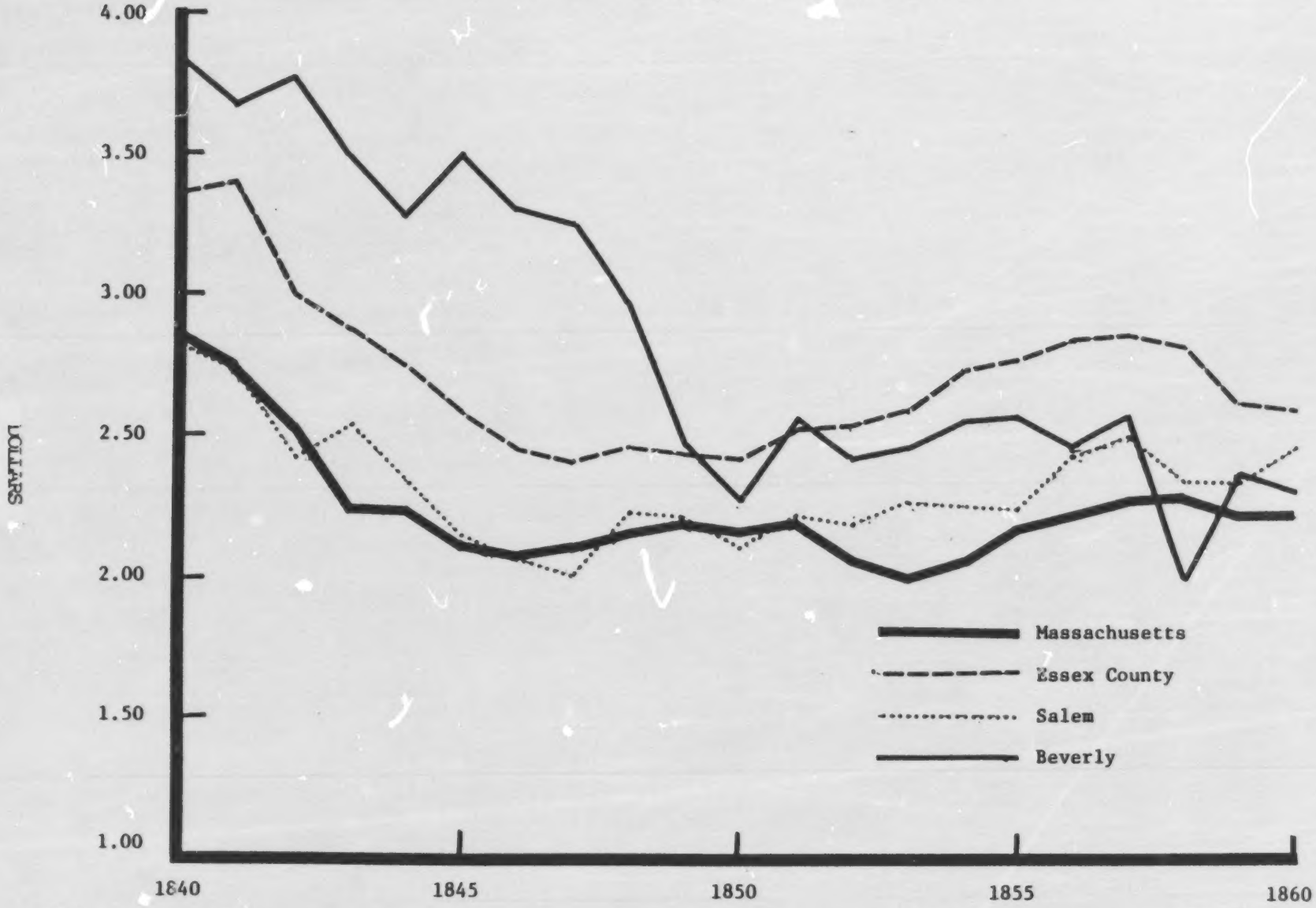
The relative burden of public expenditures in Beverly were considerably higher than in Salem. In 1839-40, Beverly taxpayers spent 60.4 percent more per $1000 valuation than their Salem neighbors; in 1859-60 the Beverly taxpayers still spent 33.5 percent more per $1000 valuation than Salem residents. Thus, given the relatively more limited economic base of Beverly than of Salem, its citizens were more supportive financially of public education in that community than would be suggested by simply looking at the overall amount of money spent on public or private education in those towns.

Up to now we have considered school expenses from the perspective of the community and the taxpayers. Now we want to look at the costs of education from the point of view of the students to see whether the quality of their education, as indexed by the expenditures, may have shifted over time.

In terms of public and private expenditures, in real dollars, per person under twenty, Beverly spent more money on education (see figure 7). In

Figure 6

School Expenditures in Dollars Per $1000 of Valuation, 1840-1860



1839-40, Beverly spent $2.34 per person under twenty on education; in 1859-60 it spent $2.93 per person under twenty--or an increase of 25.2 percent. Thus, while Salem was cutting back on the amount of money spent per person under twenty, Beverly increased its support--though even on the eve of the Civil War, Salem spent a third more than Beverly.

Insert Figure 7

As Beverly shifted between 1840 and 1860 away from private schooling, the rate of public expenditure per person under twenty increased even more rapidly (see figure 8). While the town spent only $1.03 per person under twenty for public education in 1839-40, by 1859-60 that figure had risen to $2.74--a huge increase of 166.0 percent during those years.

Insert Figure 8

It is also important to compare developments in public school expenditures in Salem and Beverly. Though Salem spent considerably more money on public school education per person under twenty in 1839-40, Beverly not only caught up with Salem but surpassed it by 1859-60. However, the overall amount of money spent per person under twenty in 1859-60 continued to be much higher in Salem than in Beverly because in the former private education still provided 34.1 percent of total school expenditures while in the latter it only provided 6.5 percent of total school expenditures.

Though Beverly citizens spend considerably more on education per person under twenty, this does not necessarily mean that the amount of money spent per pupil actually increased since Beverly schools enrolled an increasing proportion of persons under twenty and were kept open longer. Perhaps the increased expenditures were used almost exclusively to fund the expansion of the system to accomodate the additional students and to fund the longer school year.

To see whether the quality of education, as indexed by expenditures, may have changed over time, we can calculate the cost (in real dollars) per

Figure 7

Amount of Money Spent for Schools Per Persons Ages 0-19, 1840-1860,
In Dollars Adjusted for Cost of Living (1860=100)

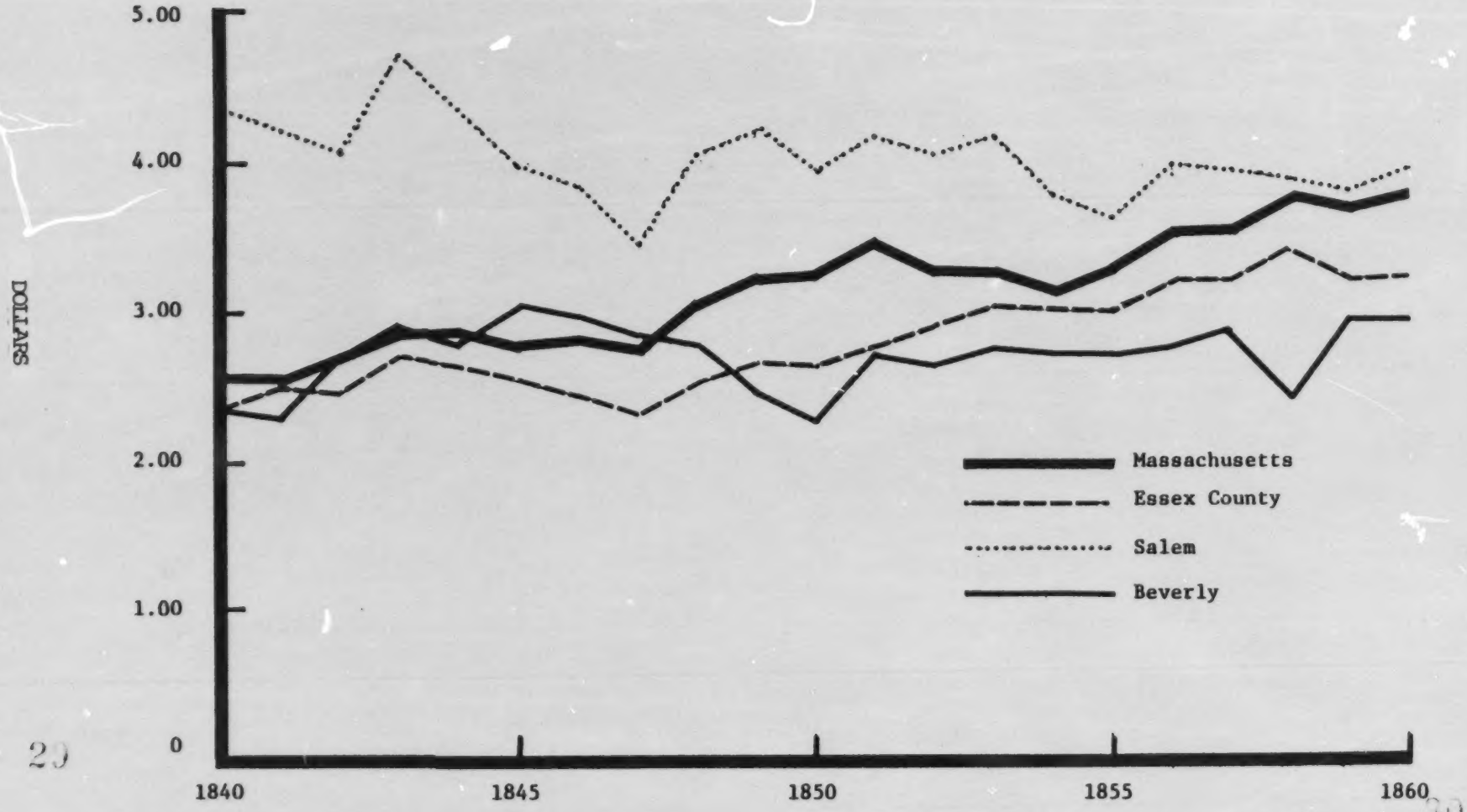
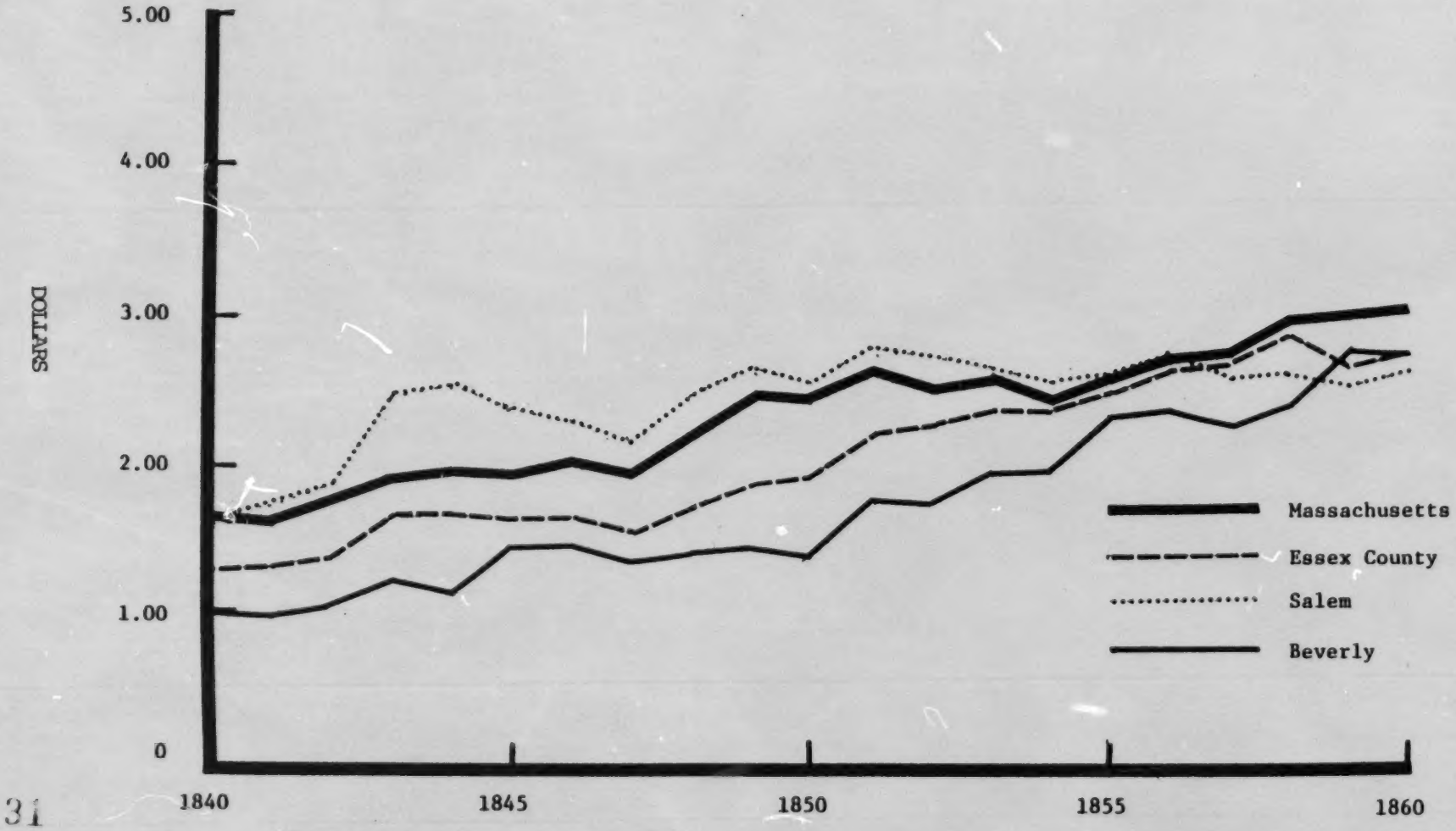


Figure 8

Amount of Money Spent for Public Schools Per Persons Ages 0-19, 1840-1860,
In Dollars Adjusted for Cost of Living (1860=100)



100 days of school attended (see figure 9). In Beverly, there was relatively little change--in 1839-40, the cost per 100 days of school attended was $3.96 and had declined to $3.73 by 1859-60. A similar decline, though more marked, occurred in Salem. Thus, while the overall amount of money spent per person under twenty increased in ante-bellum Beverly, it did not result in more being spent per day of schooling actually received.

Insert Figure 9

While the overall cost per 100 days of education changed relatively little in Beverly, the cost of public schools greatly increased--from $2.33 per 100 days in 1839-40 to $3.73 in 1859-60 (see figure 10). The increase in the cost of public schooling by almost forty percent probably reflects the willingness and the need for the community to pay more money for teachers (since salaries comprised most of the school budget). While one cannot and should not simply equate rising costs with increases in educational quality, it is likely that the caliber of teachers hired in Beverly during these years was improving.[19]

Insert Figure 10

While the cost of public education rose, that of private education declined from $8.82 per 100 days of school in 1839-40 to $5.99 per 100 days of school in 1859-60 (see figure 11). Since this decline in the cost of school occurred at the same time that fewer and fewer students were attending private schools, the total amount of income available for private education dropped drastically--thus probably reducing the quality of teachers willing to teach private as opposed to public schools. One result of this shift probably was to make public education increasingly attractive in Beverly compared to private education and thus encouraging parents to send their children to the public schools.

Insert Figure 11

Figure 9

Cost Per Hundred Days of School Attended, 1840-1860,
In Dollars Adjusted for Cost of Living (1860=100)

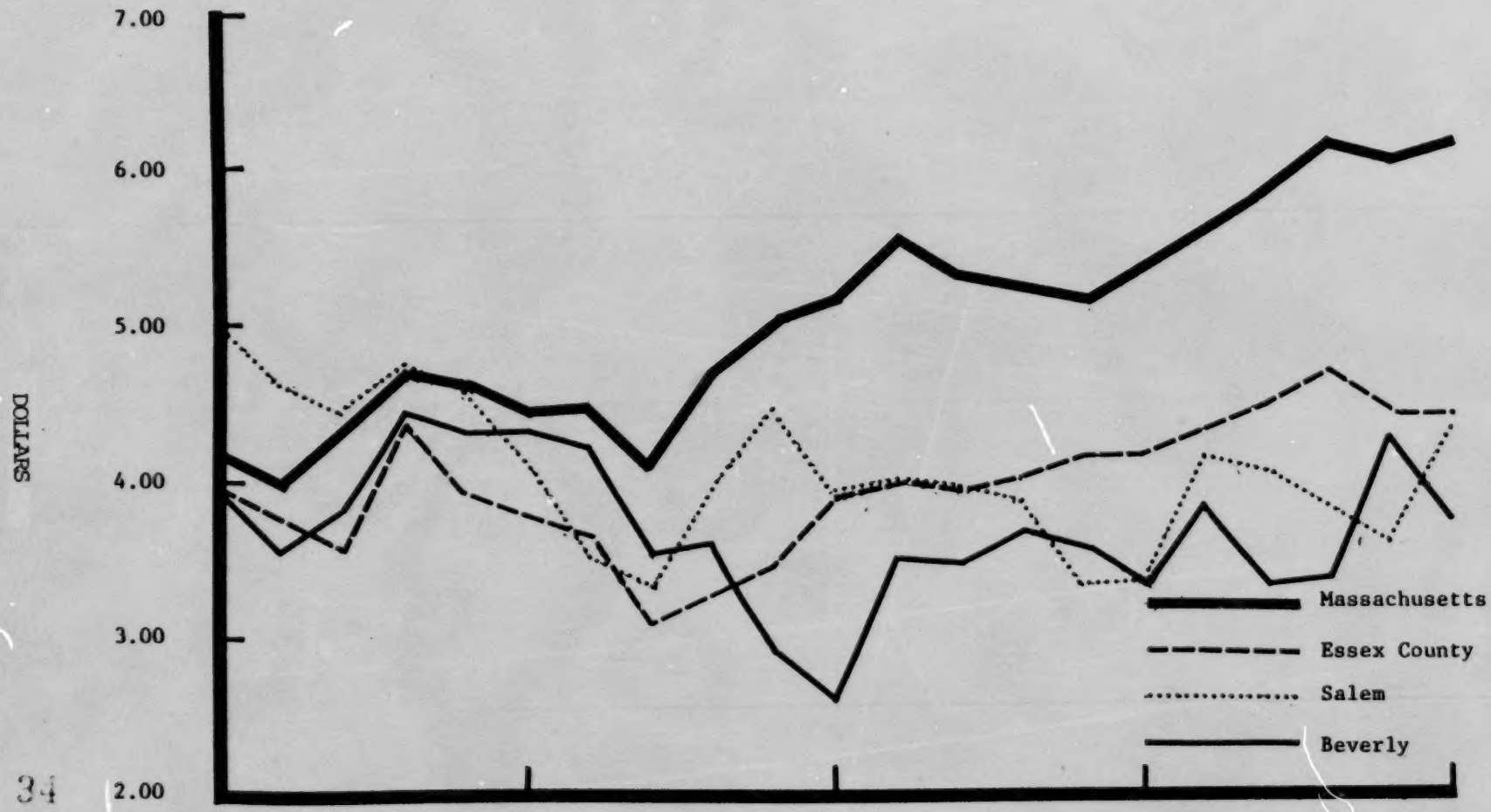


Figure 10

Cost Per Hundred Days of Public School Attended, 1840-1860,
In Dollars Adjusted for Cost of Living (1860=100)

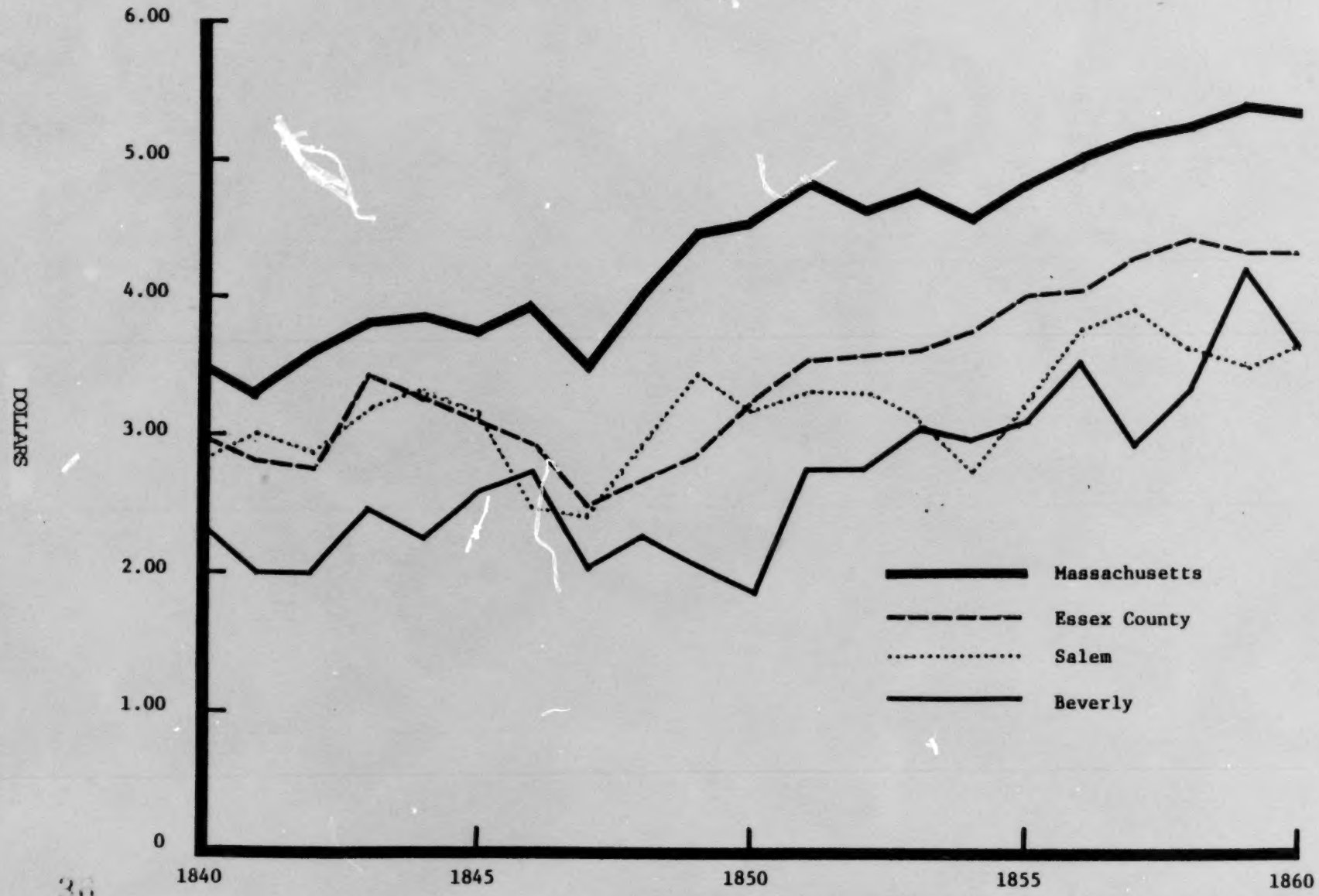
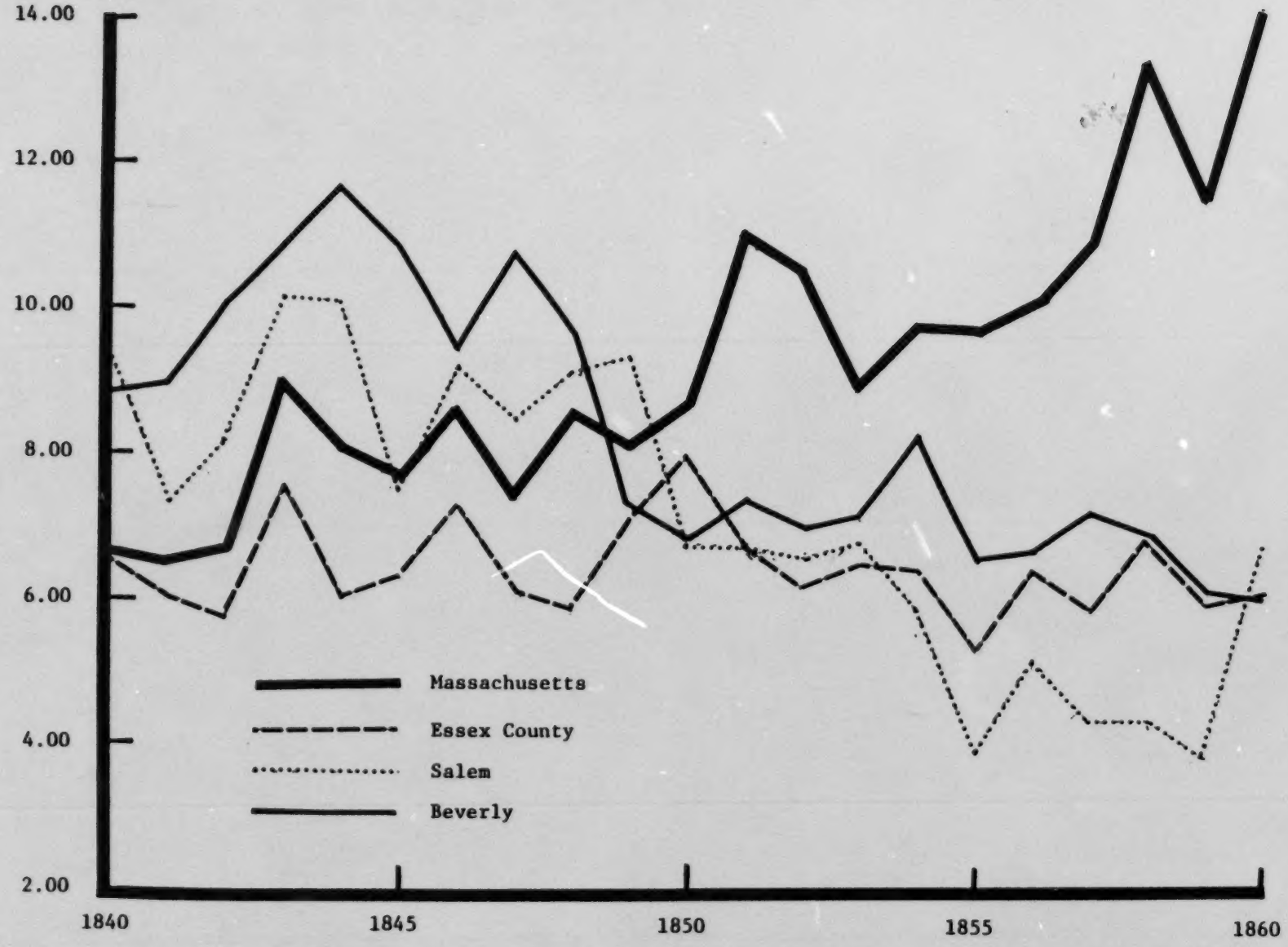


Figure 11

Cost Per Hundred Days of Private School Attended, 1840-1860,
In Dollars Adjusted for Cost of Living (1860=100)



This lengthy introduction of the educational developments in Beverly is meant to give the reader the sense of continued educational change in that community. The attempt to create a public high school was only part of the larger reform efforts--and probably not even the most important one since the rapid expansion of public common schools had much more impact on the school-age population and much more support from the citizens of Beverly. Therefore, an analysis of the reactions to the public high school without due attention to other educational developments in that community gives us a very distorted picture.

Nor was the issue of the high school the central controversy during those years. Much more attention, for example, was paid to the issue of the quality of the teachers. In school committee report after school committee report, the low quality of the teachers was lamented--partly as the result of low salaries and partly due to the fact that each local district hired its own teachers without closely scrutinizing their credentials.[20]

Another continuing problem, and one that would ultimately have a major impact on the high school controversy, was the inequality of funds distributed among the ten school districts. The problem was due to the fact that the ten districts were quite unequal in population--ranging from 25 taxable polls in Dodge's Row in 1843-44 to 340 polls in the Grammar District. Since the public school funds were apportioned in the early 1840s strictly on the basis of the taxable polls in each district, the smallest districts received very limited funding with which to staff and repair their public schools.[21] Thus, while Dodge's Row in 1843-44 only received $47.50 for its entire school budget, the Grammar District had $646.00.

In part, of course, the differences in money allocated reflected differentials in the number of students to be taught, but there were still serious equalities. While the amount of money allocated per average public school student in Dodge's Row was only $1.90 in 1843-44, it was $6.46 in the Grammar District. The inequality was not only in terms of the money per student, but also in the absolute amount of money available to hire teachers. Economies of scale allowed the larger districts to keep schools open longer and to hire better teachers.

In 1843-44 there were complaints about the inequalities in the system. The town responded by showing that the smaller districts were receiving a fair share of the funds in view of the amount of taxation they contributed to the town coffers.[22] Though this was true, it did not solve the problem of inequalities due to size. Therefore the town abandoned its practice of appropriating school funds on the basis of taxable polls and shifted to a system where one eighth of the public school funds would be equally divided among the districts and the rest would be allocated on the basis of the school-age population.[23] Though this did not eliminate the problem, it minimized it to some degree. Thus, the tension between the outlying, smaller districts and the more central, larger ones continued and ultimately played a key role in the defeat of the public high school.

In his analysis of the creation of the Beverly High School in 1858, Michael Katz makes much of the strained social conditions in that community during the 1850s which lead prominent citizens to create such an institution in order to bring back more order and stability to their town.[24] In this way, the socio-economic changes in Beverly in the late 1840s and 1850s are closely linked to the efforts to create a public high school.

Though Katz's argument seems persuasive in many respects, it fails to note that the first major effort to create a public high school in Beverly occurred more than a decade earlier--at a time when the socio-economic change argument cannot be pushed as vigorously. On March 1, 1844, F. W. Choate and others petitioned the town for the establishment of a high school. After considerable discussion, the town meeting rejected the petition.[25] Thus, the initial effort to create a high school in Beverly occurred well before many of the hypothesized social disruptions and dislocations had happened and it was soundly defeated as were the initial efforts ten years later.

It is also very important to read further in the town meeting minutes because the town moved to significantly increase public school funding at the same time that it refused to build a high school. The Selectmen were ordered to increase the amount of funding for public schools to be twenty-five percent more than any amount that they had raised prior to 1840.[26] In other words, at the same time that the town rejected the additional expense of a public high

school, it passed a major expansion of the school budget so that all districts could benefit accordingly. This deliberate trade-off between more money for common schools or for the establishment of a public high school became a permanent feature of the debates in Beverly with the outlying, smaller districts particularly anxious to obtain more funds for their common schools which were woefully understaffed and in need of repairs while the larger districts, the recipients of a disproportionate share of the existing public school budget, could better afford to contemplate an expansion of the public school system to include a high school.

The failure to establish a high school did not seem to upset the community too much. Perhaps the continued willingness of the citizens of Beverly to fund a major expansion of the public school facilities satisfied many educational reformers who probably were more concerned about the quality of the teachers and classrooms than the lack of a public high school. In addition, the Beverly Academy, a private incorporated school, provided a reasonable substitute for public high school education in that community at zero cost to the taxpayers. Though most of the proprietors of the Beverly Academy would have been happy to see the establishment of a public high school, they and others seemed willing or resigned to the lack of such an institution during the rest of the 1840s.[27]

In the early 1850s there appears to have been a surge of educational reform efforts in Beverly which focused on a wide variety of issues including the establishment of a public high school. Whereas most reports of the Beverly School Committee during the 1840s had been perfunctory and highly complimentary of the existing school system, a definite new tone emerges in the early 1850s starting with the report of March 1853.[28]

The initial target of the newly aroused school committee was the improvement of the quality of teachers by hiring a full-time superintendent who could manage the affairs of the school system better than a school committee composed of part-time individuals.

> The School Committe would respectfully submit to the Town that in their opinion, our common schools, under the usual management do not accomplish all the good of which they

> are capable. This deficiency arises in part from the inequality of teachers. Most of our teachers pursue the business for a limited period, and not as a profession. They are mostly young men pursuing their own education at our Literary Institutions. Our schools, therefore, are subject to all the evils, arising from the irregularities of character attainments and experience of these temporary teachers. The duties of the committee are arduous, and difficult to be performed, requiring an amount of attention, labor and devotedness to the subject which it is difficult for them to render. Their own professional avocations are sufficient to occupy their time--and if perfectly qualified they could scarcely do justice to the schools, even if paid for their services. The committee would therefore earnestly recommend that the Town authorize the Committee to employ a suitable Superintendent of the Schools to perform these services and pay him a reasonable compensation for his labor.[29]

The effort to hire a superintendent of the public schools succeeded, despite some opposition, and the town meeting of March 1853 allocated $500 for that purpose. At the same time, however, the town defeated an effort by educational reformers to abolish the existing system of local school districts in favor of a more centralized system under the control of the town school committee.[30] Thus, while the town was willing to go along with the idea of modernizing the public school system by hiring a superintendent, even though this meant an increase of 12.5 percent on the existing school budget, they were unwilling to take away any major power from the local school districts--again revealing the tension between the districts and the continued suspicion of the outlying ones that they would be overwhelmed and outvoted in any more centralized system.

The new superintendent, Rufus Putnam, immediately brought up the issue of the lack of education for older children in his first report of March 1854:

> And can it be that we are doing our duty to the scores of youth in our town, for whose education we are in an important respect accountable, while we withold from them the education which they need, and which many of them so earnestly desire? Is it doing all our duty to this class to furnish them with a teacher, for three or three and a half months in the whole year, and give that teacher as much other labor as one man can possibly

> perform, without attempting to carry them forward in the higher branches of study? The fact that so many of the older scholars have attended the winter schools so regularly from the beginning to the end of the term, is sufficient proof, if we had no other, of the desire that exists for a more thorough education than can be obtained under the present system.
>
> It does not become me to express any opinion as to the best method of placing a more extended course of education within the reach of those who are ready to avail themselves of the opportunity, were it provided. You, gentlemen, know better than I can, the best methods of supplying this want. The fact, however, that the school houses at which five sevenths of all the children in the town attend school are within a mile of a certain centre, and that that centre is accessible by railroad to one-seventh more, removes the objection which often exists, in towns of equal extent, to a central High School, open to all the youth of the town, whose age and literary attainments may be deemed sufficient to give them admission to it.[31]

The call for the establishment of a high school by the new superintendent was certainly an important step in bringing this issue back before the town. We cannot tell whether he was acting on his own initiative or whether this was something that the rest of the members of the school committee desired and wanted him to open the way for further discussing it. In any case, it is doubtful that a new superintendent would have tried in his first year of office to raise this issue single-handedly unless he were assured of considerable support from the members of the town school committee as well as other town leaders. Furthermore, the immediate support for such a move in the community suggests that this effort was part of a well co-ordinated plan among some Beverly citizens rather than the isolated attempt of the new school superintendent to care for the needs of advanced students.

Perhaps another important factor leading to the effort to establish a public high school in 1854 was the closing of the private Beverly Academy in November of that year. The Beverly Academy had been opened in May 1833 and had provided an alternative for older students in the community for over twenty years.[32] Its closing in 1854, for whatever reasons, may have stimulated some Beverly citizens to join the effort to establish a public high school at this time since their children would no longer have this option available to them.

On the other hand, since private sources had provided such a facility for interested parents and students for so many years, many other Beverly taxpayers may have felt that the town should not bear the costs of such an institution since if there really was sufficient demand for such a facility, one could be re-established under private auspices and without any public funds.

The campaign for a public high school was quickly taken up by the new local newspaper--the Beverly Citizen. On February 9, 1854, a month before the annual town meeting, it urged the creation of a public high school.

> A High School. There is a very general feeling among our inhabitants in favor of establishing a High School in this town. A school of this description has been wanted for a number of years, for the accomodation of pupils who have advanced beyond the general standard of instruction afforded in the district schools. We believe there is no other town as large as Beverly in the State, which has not a High School--thereby affording to the youth an opportunity to prepare for college, or to pursue the higher branches of learning, without going out of town for that purpose. The present state of things with reference to this matter is certainly not very democratic. Our young men, under a truly democratic arrangement, who were desirous of proceeding in their studies beyond the ordinary standard, would be able to do so at a free High School. At present, a young man, though very desirous of preparing himself for college, or for the study of a profession, would not be able to do so, under our free school system; and if his pecuniary resources would not enable him to pay for his tuition at an academy, he would be obliged to give up his intentions. The want of a High School in this place may account for the fact that Beverly has not so many representatives in the learned professions as many other towns of the same size. This, however, is a matter of but little importance; but it is highly important that the youth of Beverly should be provided with all those educational advantages, which, under the laws of the state, they might justly claim for the public.[33]

As part of their co-ordinated effort to create a public high school, Daniel Leach from the Massachusetts Board of Education was invited to address the citizens of the town two weeks before the annual town meeting on the best ways and means of promoting education. The issue of the high school was raised and apparently enthusiastically espoused since many of the staunchest supporters

of the high school were present and active at that meeting.[34]

Daniel Hildreth and others offered a petition at the March 1854 town meeting calling for the establishment of a public high school.[35] The town meeting referred the matter to a special committee which reported favorably on the creation of such an institution at the April town meeting. After considerable discussion, the town voted against the proposal.[36]

Several observations can be made about the efforts in 1854 to create a public high school. First, the effort to establish a public high school must be seen as part of a larger effort in the early 1850s to revitalize Beverly's school system. As such, much of the impetus for this effort can be seen within the broader context of educational reform--both in its origin and its importance. While the public high school was a very important part of the reform agenda, it was only one of many other reforms that were being advocated in that community. In fact, I suspect that the educational reformers probably would have attached more importance to the abolishment of the local school district system or the creation of a school superintendent than to the building of a public high school.

Second, the new school superintendent played an important role in calling for the establishment of a public high school. At the same time, however, there is considerable evidence to believe that this effort was a well co-ordinated attempt on the part of many Beverly citizens rather than the pet idea of the superintendent. Perhaps the idea of obtaining a school superintendent had been regarded as only the first phase of the broader effort to reform the schools.

Third, while Michael Katz has made much of the role of Robert Rantoul, Sr., in this process, there are reasons to suspect that he played a very minor role. Katz does not seem to be aware of the scandal in 1853 over the case of Miss Maxey, an insane person under the care of the Overseers of the Poor in Beverly.[37] Miss Maxey was very poorly treated by the Board of Overseers; for their misconduct in this case, the entire Board of Overseers were prosecuted by the town and forced to retire from office in disgrace. Though Robert Rantoul, a long-time member of this body, was so highly respected for his past services to the community that he was lavishly praised at the

town meeting and in the local paper (though not exonerated in the Maxey episode), he nonetheless had sent a letter of resignation from all current or future town offices to the March 1854 town meeting.[38] In fact, at the meeting with Daniel Leach of the Massachusetts Board of Education which discussed educational reforms for the community, he does not appear to have been present.[39] In other words, though Katz devoted much attention to the ideology and role of Robert Rantoul in the fight for the Beverly High School, he seems to have been relatively inactive in that effort--especially in the early 1850s.

Fourth, one of the major groups advocating a public high school as well as other educational reforms was the clergymen of Beverly. Clergymen routinely sat on the town school committee in larger numbers than any other group and many of them spearheaded the effort to establish the high school. Surprisingly, while Katz devoted so much time to the role of Robert Rantoul, he entirely ignores the important role of the clergy in this process.

Finally, though the decision to abolish the Beverly High School in March 1860 may have involved the opposition to any higher taxes for public education, the same was not true of the outcome in April 1854. In fact, the same town meeting which rejected the public high school voted an additional $1000 for the public schools--a sizable increase of 18.2 percent over the previous school budget. Furthermore, while earlier town meetings had divided 12.5 percent of the general funds for schools equally among the ten districts and the rest on the basis of the school-age population, it was now decided to divide 20.0 percent of the general school funds among the districts and the remainder on the basis of the school-age population. Thus, just as ten years earlier, the rejection of a public high school in Beverly was not a signal that the town lost interest in public education, but an indication that the citizens of Beverly preferred to improve the quality of their common schools rather than building a central high school for a few older and more advanced students. The continued hostility among the local districts was also evident; interestingly, the smaller and less affluent districts gained in this process not only by the expansion of the general school fund by nearly twenty percent, but also by the change in the manner of districting the general school funds.

The defeat of the high school in 1854 temporarily setback efforts in that area. No one brought up the issue again in the town meeting in 1855. The tension between those favoring a larger role for the town school committee and those determined to keep control within the local districts, however, continued unabated with the former gaining two minor, but still significant victories. First, the town meeting voted that teachers should not be paid any money until the town school committee had examined their qualifications. Though the district prudential committees continued to employ their own teachers, they were now obligated to present their choices for examination by the town school committee.[40] Second, in response to the recently enacted state legislation, the town meeting instructed the school committee to purchase such books and stationary as may be necessary to supply the public schools. Thus, though the 1855 session of the town meeting did not see the introduction of the high school issue, it saw the continuation of the struggle between those favoring more responsibilities for the town school committee and those wishing to preserve as much power as possible for the local districts.

Though there was no attempt to bring up the high school issue in the town meetings of 1855, its supporters had not abandoned the fight. They had merely awaited a year to reopen the battle. The school committee, for example, continued to press for a public high school:

> The public schools in this town, twenty-two in number and which ought to conveniently accomodate eleven hundred and sixty-eight pupils (the number between five and fifteen years of age) are generally in good condition, and the complete fullness of time seems to have arrived when a "high School of the first order" should be established.
>
> Scholars sufficient to fill such a school can easily be found, qualified for immediate admission even if we take the highest standard of scholarship adopted by any High School in the State.[41]

In March 1856, F.W. Choate and others submitted a petition to the town meeting calling for the establishment of a public high school. The motion was again defeated.[42] At the same time that the town rejected the public high school,

another group of citizens attempted to reverse the recent policy of having the school committee purchase books and stationary for the local districts. The latter subject, however, was postponed for a later meeting, but its reopening clearly suggests that the town was still split over the proper role of the school committee and the local prudential committees.[43]

It is difficult to reconstruct exactly the next round of events since the town records are rather terse. It appears that after suffering two successive defeats on the establishment of the public high school, its supporters, instead of giving up, threatened to evoke the Massachusetts state law which required towns of the size of Beverly to maintain such an institution. As a result, a special and unusual meeting of the town was called for December 1856 to deal with the issue of the high school. Despite the threat of taking the town to court, the town meeting again rejected the motion to build a public high school.[44]

At the March 1857 town meeting, Joseph Ober, from one of the small school districts (East Farms) successfully offered a motion to repeal the authorization for the school committee to purchase books and stationary. At the same meeting, John I. Baker offered a motion which suggests that the threat of the town being taken to court was now regarded as a real possibility: "That the School Committee be authorized to establish a High School as required by law."[45] His effort to bring Beverly into compliance with the state law was of no avail as the motion was defeated 145 to 213.[46]

With the town decidedly opposed to a public high school, even after the threat of being taken to court, the supporters of that effort went ahead with legal proceedings against the town. The next mention of this issue in the town records is of a warrant for a future meeting in July 1857:

> To see what measures the town will adopt relative to an indictment against the town for nuisance, whether by defending the suit consequent thereon, or settling the same, or in any other manner deemed best for the interest of the town.[47]

The issue of the indictment against the town was discussed at the July 1857 meeting, but no definite action was taken.[48] Perhaps the town hoped

that by taking no official position immediately some form of compromise might be worked out. In any case, it was necessary to call another town meeting on September 15, 1857 at which time it was voted that the selectmen be authorized to defend the interests of the town against the suit.[49]

Having looking into the legal situation a bit further, the selectmen called for another town meeting on October 18, 1857 at which time they reported their findings:

> The 2d article of the warrant was then taken up, and after a statement by the Chairman of the Selectmen that he had consulted C. G. Loring Esq. and others upon the subject, who were all unanimously of the opinion that the town must establish a High School or suffer the penalty for their neglect.
>
> On a motion of William H. Lovett, it was voted. That the School Committee be authorized to establish a High School according to the law, and that a sum not exceeding four hundred dollars be appropriated for that purpose.
>
> 85 voting in favor and 79 in opposition to the above vote. An amendment to the above motion was adopted and after some discussions reconsidered.
>
> On the motion of Isaac Prince it was also voted That the School Committee locate the School at the Old West Farms School House if the town is obliged to establish a School before March Meeting.[50]

Though Katz mentions the indictment against the town for not complying with the state law requiring towns of the size of Beverly to have a public high school, he failed to consider the implications of this important event.[51] The majority of Beverly citizens never favored a public high school--it was passed only after the unanimous opinion among lawyers that the town would not only have to build a high school, but pay a penalty as well for its delay. Even facing an indictment, a large proportion of the town was willing to incur the penalties rather than giving in to the minority of citizens who used a state law to circumvent the desires of the majority of the recent town meetings. The high school was not just an institution that was "imposed" on the working class citizens of Beverly, but on the large majority of individuals in that community who favored higher taxes for common schools though not for a public high school.

A related factor which Katz ignored in his analysis of the subsequent vote against the Beverly High School in March 1860 was the tremendous amount of bitterness that must have been generated by this episode. Many individuals, who may not have been that hostile per se to the high school, probably were outraged to find a small minority of their own townsmen subvert the wishes of the majority by resorting to a state law which had only rarely been evoked before. This use of state law also may have frightened citizens from the outlying areas even more because they now realized that the minority in the town who favored a strong centralized school system might in the future use some newly enacted state law to grab power from the local school districts despite the wishes of the majority of the taxpayers. In other words, to understand the intensity and pattern of feelings against the high school in March 1860, it is necessary to comprehend how the high school was originally created.

A second curious item in the vote to create the high school was the amendment to have it placed in the West Farms District--one of the smallest and least accessible areas of the community (see map of Beverly in 1875). As the school report admitted after the creation of the high school:

> During the winter term, with one or two changes, the number continued at 17. It appeared upon careful inquiry that the diminution of the School at the fall term arose from the fact that the fatigue of daily travel to and from a part of the town so difficult to access, as the West Farms, was found upon trial to be too great for many of those children who had at the outset hoped and endeavored to enjoy the advantages of this School.[52]

Insert Map

One might suppose that the location for the high school of the West Farms was done in order to obtain support for the high school from the outlying areas--but this does not appear to have been the case, especially since the individual who made that amendment was not noted as a supporter of the high school.[53] Nor can the reason be that a large number of students from that area were particularly interested in attending the school since they did not do so once it opened.[54] Rather, I suspect, that the opponents of the school

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tried to sabotage those who favored it by locating it in an area that would not serve the majority of the town well and would therefore obtain only limited interest from parents and students. Perhaps, given the closeness of the vote at that meeting, the opponents thought that they might discourage enough supporters of the high school by putting it in such an adverse location that it might even defeat the attempt to build the high school. In any case, the location of the high school in the West Farms District meant that most children in Beverly had only difficult access to that facility at best.

In accordance with the decision of March 1858, a public high school was set up at West Farms under the guidance of John R. Baker. Candidates for admission were required to be twelve years of age, to present certificates of good moral character and literary qualifications from their last instructors, and to pass a satisfactory examination.[55]

The town had allocated an additional $1000 for the public high school. This was a major increase in school expenses--18.2 percent. The expense of the high school was an important part of the overall town budget--in 1858 it comprised 5.6 percent of the total town expenses.[56]

As we saw earlier, the initial decision in 1854 not to build a high school was not mainly an economic decision in the sense that the town simultaneously increased funds for common schools by $1000. The economic situation in Beverly in 1858, however, may have been quite different. With the economic downturn in Beverly following the Panic of 1857, the town was cutting back its overall town expenses--especially in the area of highway building and repairs.[57] In this new atmosphere of reduced economic prosperity, the prospect of having to spread another $1000 for a public high school which had been forced upon them must have angered many Beverly taxpayers.

When the town was debating whether or not to establish a public high school, the proponents confidently assured everyone that large numbers of highly qualified students could be found. In one school report, it was hinted that at least fifty students would be ready to enter a new public high school.[58]

The response to the high school was a major disappointment. Initially, only 25 girls and 8 boys enrolled and at the fall term that number had dropped to 17.[59] The second year did not see a major increase in the number

of students.[60] Not only was the total number of students disappointingly low, but the great majority of them were females. In almost all of the debates about the value of a high school education, the stress had been placed, implicitly or explicitly, on the education of males. Yet much less than an average of ten males attended the high school during the first two years. Thus, despite the high cost of this institution, the benefits to the community seemed more limited than ever.

The active supporters of the high school did not give up. They were convinced that the poor location of the school, in the West Farms District, accounted for much of the low rate of attendance and sought to shift the location of the high school at the March 1859 town meeting. Though everyone probably agreed that the West Farms location was not ideal, it was impossible to obtain a majority vote to move it to any other location such as the Grammar District, Washington District, or the South District.[61] While we cannot be sure of the actual dynamics of the vote since no record of the voters by name was ever taken, it is likely that the opponents of the high school, still bitter over the establishment of the institution, blocked any effort to move it to a more convenient location for those who favored it. The struggle for the location of the public high school was not simply a contest between the outlying districts and those more centrally located since the latter always had more than enough votes by themselves in the town meetings to win any such election if they were united.

The efforts to relocate the Beverly High School in 1859 had failed and with it any chance for great increases in enrollments. The controversy over the Beverly High School had not gone away and the warrant for the town meeting in March 1860 brought the entire high school matter before the taxpayers once again:

> To adopt such measures, grant such sums of money, and make such regulations in regard to the High School, and other schools throughout the town, and act and do anything respecting the same as they may deem expedient.[62]

Though there is no evidence that the opponents of the Beverly High School had caucused ahead of time, the backers of that institution, including the

Beverly Citizen sought to drum up support for it before the meeting. In a published letter to the editor, nine days before the town meeting, "A Looker On" praised the Beverly High School:

> This School is no longer an experiment of doubtful success if it ever was regarded in such a light. During the two years of its existence, it has gained a character of which it may well be proud. So far from proving a failure, it has accomplished much in the right direction. Though but few have enjoyed its advantages, yet the improvement made by those who have attended to its exercises, can but occasion no small regret that so many should have been deprived of such opportunities.[63]

It is interesting to note that even in praising the high school, the writer was forced to acknowledge that very few individuals had made use of it. Thus, though the parents of the children going to the high school should have been among its staunchest supporters, this could not have made much of a difference at this time since so few children were enrolled.

The town meeting met on March 12, 1860 and selected the town officials for the coming year. Then it turned to a motion by Daniel Foster (one of the opponents of the high school) "that the town retain the School District System and that prudential Committees of the several School Districts be authorized to select and contract with the Teachers in the several School Districts for the ensuing year."[64] The motion carried and reaffirmed the desire of the town to keep the control of the public schools with the local districts rather than with the town school committee.

As the town did not finish its lengthy agenda that day, it adjourned and reconvened on March 14, 1860. F. W. Choate, a strong supporter of the high school, then moved that the high school should be located at the Armory Hall for the coming year. The motion was defeated.[65]

Joseph Thissell then offered the following motion: "To discontinue the High School in this town and to request the Selectmen to secure disinterested legal counsel to carry the case to the Supreme Court if the case required it, and all the Expenses to be paid by the Town Treasurer." After a series of parliamentary maneuvers, the vote was taken and it passed 249 to 143--the newly created Beverly High School was defeated.[66] Though

town meeting adjourned for lunch, a motion to reconsider the vote on the Beverly High School lost 144 to 187.[67]

Several things are worth noting about the vote to abolish the Beverly High School before we do a detailed analysis of the actual pattern of voting on that issue. First, though Katz analyzes the vote as a reflection of those who favored or opposed a public high school, it was more properly a vote on whether or not to comply with the state law which required a public high school for towns the size of Beverly. This is a very important distinction because the citizens of Beverly never voted to establish a public high school by themselves. It was only when they were faced with an indictment which they seemed destined to lose that they voted for the high school--and even then it was by a very close margin. As a result, Katz's analysis of the actual vote probably reflects in large measure how individuals felt about the idea of doing something blatantly illegal--especially when they were threatened with monetary penalties for failure to comply with the state law.

Second, though Katz describes the controversy surrounding the abolition of the Beverly High School and the social tensions this revealed about the community, he did not emphasize that at the next town meeting (March 1861), the petition of H. E. Woodberry and others for re-establishing the public high school passed--in large measure, no doubt, because of the continued legal action against the town.[68] Furthermore, while the decision to abolish the Beverly High School had evoked considerable hostility and displays of anger at the March 1860 meeting, this was not true of the March 1861 meeting. As the Beverly Citizen described it:

> The meeting was unusually harmonious and although several matters elicited considerable earnest discussion, yet the tone and temper of the meeting was such throughout as to be evident to all present that the "era of good feeling" had arrived.[69]

In other words, while the rancor and division over the Beverly High School in March 1860 was quite real, by March 1861 it had subsided. Perhaps the citizens had sufficiently vented their anger and frustration against the minority of Beverly taxpayers who had tried to impose the high school upon

them. Or maybe they had resigned themselves to the fact that nothing could be done about this problem since Beverly was about to lose in the courts. In any case, one gets a very misleading perception of the social tensions within Beverly by not realizing that the public high school was re-established under relatively harmonious conditions one year later.

Third, whereas Katz focuses on the class tensions within Beverly as the reason for the outrage against the public high school, he neglects the bitterness that was engendered by having this expensive public institution, which benefited very few children and was endorsed only by a minority of the town, forced upon them by a faction of educational reformers led by some of the prominent clergymen. In an analysis of the vote on the Beverly High School, the Beverly Citizen confirms, in part, this latter observation:

> The School Committee came in of course for the usual "left hand" compliments; the Ministers especially! Though there were but four, of them, out of a Committee of twelve--still, as they have been longest in the service, we suppose they were considered, on this account, the embodiment of all its sins. They were charged with having "rid out the appropriations" and with "riding over the Town"! What a lucky circumstance that these clerical Jehus did not live in witch times![70]

Fourth, Katz's suggestion that the taxpayers of the community were concerned about the high costs of a public high school seems quite reasonable --especially in 1860. In both 1844 and 1854 when the issue of a public high school was brought up, the cost to the taxpayers does not seem to have been as serious a problem in the sense that the town allocated even more money to the common schools at the same time that it rejected the high school. But when the Beverly High School was abolished in 1860, the $1000 previously allocated for it was not redistributed to the common schools through the general school fund, but eliminated altogether.[71] This suggests that the economic difficulties facing the community in the late 1850s encouraged a growing conservatism among Beverly taxpayers against any additional expenditures.

Fifth, the issue of geography continued to surface throughout this controversy--especially in regard to where the Beverly High School should be located. Even after the re-establishment of the high school in March 1861

under relatively harmonious conditions, it was still difficult to settle this issue.[72] Furthermore, though much of the debate focused on the location of the high school, the broader and more important antagonism was probably over the issue of spending such a large sum for a central high school (used by so few students) or expanding the aid for common schools in the outlying areas which received very limited public funding because of their size. It is very interesting to note that in the late 1880s when Frederick A. Ober wrote a short history of Beverly, he analyzed the fight over the establishment of a public high school along these lines:

> The High School was not established until after a conflict of several years, the opposition being not so much against the establishment of the school itself as from fear that the money devoted to its support would be proportionately taken from the various district schools, all of them being popular local institutions, and each with its special neighborhood attractions.
>
> The town had become large enough to be liable in law to support a High School, and some of its friends got so far out of patience in waiting for the town to establish it that they had it indicted. This but intensified the opposition, which was then a decided majority, and they at first attempted to defend the town; but eventually yielded, though the school was at first established at the West Farms, at some distance from the centre of population.[73]

Finally, while Katz has stressed the opposition of the workers to the Beverly High School and tied this in with the shoe strike occurring in that community at the same time, there are reasons to question this connection which was based mainly on conjecture rather than any direct evidence. Though the majority of the shoe workers (as well as fishermen and mariners, etc.) did favor the abolition of the Beverly High School, it was by no means as unanimous as suggested by a class conflict interpretation. Furthermore, using the Beverly Citizen, which was quite sympathetic to the strikers, it is possible to identify some of the leaders of the shoe strike in Beverly. Rather than finding the strike leaders unanimously opposed to the public high school, it appears that they were evenly split--hardly an indication of concerted efforts by the shoe workers to get back at the socio-economic elite of the town by opposing the public high school.

The unique feature of the vote on March 14, 1860 to abolish the Beverly High School was that the positions of each of the 392 voters was recorded by name by the town clerk, John I. Baker. This highly unusual procedure probably done to emphasize the seriousness of the situation and to provide adequate documentation for the town in the event this information was needed for the town's defense in the courts. It was the availability of such detailed voting information that Katz decided to analyze the controversy in Beverly since it would reveal the actual town split on this issue.

Following almost identical procedures to those of Katz, as much information was gathered on each of the 392 voters as possible using the federal manuscript census, the town tax list of 1859, and the town records.[74] Complete information on age, nativity, occupation, wealth, children in household, and location of residence was obtained for 370 of the 392 voters.[75]

Before we analyze the vote to abolish the Beverly High School by individuals, it is useful to place it within some context. Though not everyone answered the roll-call vote who was present at the meeting, most of those present probably did.[76] Compared to most other town meetings, this one was unusually well attended. Yet not everyone eligible to vote in the community participated. In fact, only 25.6 percent of the polls in the community actually voted. Furthermore, though Katz has made much of this event being a revolt of the working class, the least affluent individuals were much less likely to participate. While 32.8 percent of the polls with property voted, only 13.8 percent of those without any property voted.[77] Thus, though the issue of the Beverly High School attracted a lot of attention compared to most other issues before the community, it did not bring out most of the citizens—especially compared to turnout for state and national political elections which usually attracted more than twice as many voters as those who appeared on March 14, 1860 to decide the fate of the High School.

In analyzing the voting behavior of individuals, Katz cross-tabulated the data. In other words, he simply calculated the percentage of voters opposed to the Beverly High School by their wealth or occupation. Each independent variable (i.e. wealth, occupation, etc.) was cross-tabulated individually against the dependent variable (the vote on the Beverly High

School).[78] The problem with this statistical approach is that it does not allow the analyst to make valid inferences about the relative importance of each of the independent variables. Therefore, in this analysis, we will use multiple classification analysis which permits us to analyze the relationship of each of the independent variables to the dependent variable after controlling for the effects of the other independent variables.[79] Thus, we will not only be able to see what the relationship is between the wealth of the voter and his position on the Beverly High School after controlling for the effects of the other variables, but also the relative ability of the wealth of the individual to predict his vote compared to the other characteristics of the voter in our analysis.

Using a cross-tabulation of the data, Katz considered a variety of explanations of the voting behavior of the Beverly citizens on this issue. The problem throughout his analysis was that many of his independent variables were related to each other to some degree and it was difficult to untangle their relative effects using only cross-tabulation. Nevertheless, he succinctly summarized his findings as:

> For three reasons, then, the Beverly citizens voted to abolish the high school: first, people, those without children especially, protested the raising of taxes; second, the least affluent citizens felt that the high school would not benefit their children; third, they were hostile both to the wealthy leaders of the town and to the onset of industrialism. The educational promoters, who were by and large the wealthy and prominent citizens, failed to preserve the high school because they advanced arguments unacceptable to the less prosperous citizens and because they overestimated their own powers of leadership. The supporters based their pro-high school arguments on mobility and economic growth; what they failed to see was that their own values were not shared by the entire community.[80]

To analyze the vote on the Beverly High School, six independent variables were used--age, nativity, occupation, wealth, children in household, and geographic location. Many more independent variables were considered and used in other MCA runs, but this remained thw basic list for providing us with

the most succinct and yet reasonably complete set of variables for analyzing the pattern of voting on the Beverly High School.

The age of the voter was used because it was hypothesized that the younger voters may be more supportive of the high school than the older ones. The cohorts of individuals in their twenties and thirties, for example, grew up in a time when great stress was placed on the value of educational reform by Horace Mann as well as by his co-workers at the local level. Older voters, on the other hand, grew up in an environment which stressed the value of education, but one which was much less enthusiastic about high schools and more used to having parents pay for higher education of their children than the public.

Katz found almost no differences in age between the supporters and opponents of the High School. This was confirmed at the level of the simple relationship between the vote on the High School and the age of the voter since the adjusted eta^2 was zero (for this an all other references to the MCA, see tables 1 and 2). Controlling for the other factors, however, the age of the voter became much more important. Younger voters were now much more consistently likely to support the High School while older ones were more apt to oppose it. In fact, after controlling for the other factors, the age of the voter was the third best predictor of his position--better, for instance, than knowing the occupation of the voter. Thus, the advantage of controlling for other variables is nicely illustrared by this example since the age-cohort effects of the vote are lost by simply considering class means.

Insert Tables 1 and 2

Initially, I had hoped to distinguish in considerable detail the differences in voting behavior by the nativity of the individual. It was quickly apparent, however, that very few of the foreign-born living in Beverly participated in that town meeting. The best one could do was to subdivide the population into those born in Massachusetts and those born outside the state (but most of these were born in the United States).

Table 1

PERCENTAGE VOTING FOR ABOLISHING THE BEVERLY HIGH SCHOOL ON MARCH 14, 1860
ETA^2S, BETAS, AND R^2

	Eta^2	Beta
Age of Voter	0	.1606
Nativity of Voter	.0023	.0359
Occupation of Voter	.0492	.1286
Wealth of Voter	.0365	.1758
Children in Household	0	.0393
Geographic Area	.1795	.3948

R^2 = .2085

Note: The Eta^2s and R^2 have been adjusted for the degrees of freedom.

Table 2

PERCENTAGE VOTING FOR ABOLISHING THE BEVERLY HIGH SCHOOL ON MARCH 14, 1860
CLASS MEANS, ADJUSTED MEANS, NET DEVIATIONS, AND NUMBERS OF CASES
(1 = ABOLISH/0 = NOT ABOLISH)

	Class Mean	Adjusted Mean	Net Deviation	Number of Cases
Age of Voter:				
20-29	60.2	56.7	- 5.7	83
30-39	62.8	59.9	- 2.5	78
40-49	60.2	60.3	- 2.1	98
50-59	59.0	61.2	- 1.2	61
60 and Above	74.0	81.7	+19.3	50
Natvity of Voter:				
Born in Massachusetts	63.5	63.0	+ .6	337
Other	51.5	56.9	- 5.5	33
Occupation of Voter:				
Merchant	38.5	53.7	- 8.7	26
Manufacturer	50.0	52.8	- 9.6	12
Professional and White Collar	39.5	55.1	- 7.3	38
Farmer	73.2	56.6	- 5.8	41
Shoemaker	71.5	68.8	+ 6.4	123
Fishermen, Mariners	75.9	70.2	+ 7.8	29
Gentlemen, No Occupation	53.8	53.8	- 8.6	13
Other	60.2	62.0	- .4	88
Wealth of Voter:				
0	67.8	68.0	+ 5.6	146
$1 - $999	67.1	65.4	+ 3.0	140
$1000 - $4999	49.3	50.9	-11.5	69
$5000 and Above	26.7	34.3	-28.1	15

	Class Mean	Adjusted Mean	Net Deviation	Number of Cases
Children in Household:				
None	67.1	66.4	+ 4.0	70
Some	61.3	61.5	- .9	300
Geographic Area:				
Bald Hill, East Farms West Farms	87.2	84.9	+22.5	47
Mass River, Dodge's Row, Washington	69.6	69.0	+ 6.6	56
Cove	93.8	90.0	+27.6	65
Grammar	42.3	42.6	-19.8	149
South	50.9	57.4	-11.5	53
Total	62.4			370

Given the limitations of the data on nativity, no strong hypotheses were advanced on how the results may go. One possibility was that individuals born in Massachusetts would be more likely to support the High School because they grew up in a state particularly noted for its educational development and perhaps were more attached to and proud of their community than someone born elsewhere (of course, the measure of nativity is so crude that it does not allow us any real precision on these matters). The results show that individuals born in Massachusetts were more apt to vote against the High School--even after controlling for other variables. However, the nativity of the voter was a very weak explanatory variable overall and contributed very little to explaining voting behavior.

There is no ready or obvious explanation for this pattern of voting behavior. Perhaps the individuals born in Massachusetts were more likely to be life-long residents of Beverly and more traditionally oriented than those who had moved about during their lifetime in search of better economic opportunities. Again, given the great predominance of those born in Massachusetts and the lack of variation, this did not prove to be as interesting a variable as was first hypothesized.

One of the more interesting variables in this analysis id the occupation of the voter. In order to explore this variable in considerable detail, occupation was subdivided into eight categories--taking into account both conceptual considerations as well as the number of individuals in each category. It was hypothesized that voters in certain occupations such as merchants, manufacturers, professional and white collar workers, and gentlemen or those with no occupation would be more likely to support the Beverly High School than the shoemakers, fishermen, mariners, and farmers who would be less likely to see that institution as a necessary or desirable avenue for their children.

The results, after controlling for the effects of the other variables, generally confirm the initial hypothesis. Merchants, manufacturers, professional and white collar workers, and gentlemen or those with no occupation, were much more likely to support the High School. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that these individuals were often nearly evenly

split on the issue. For example, though much has been made of the role of manufacturers in promoting education, half of them voted against the High School anyway--a fact which was not altered by controlling for the other socio-economic variables. Whether these particular occupational groups supported the High School because of their desire to send their own children, their hope to upgrade the quality of education in Beverly, or their unwillingness to openly defy state law in what seemed a hopeless case, cannot be ascertained from the evidence. On suspects that aspects of all three were certainly operating with the last one certainly part of the considerations since the majority of Beverly citizens never favored the High School before the indictment.

The surprising reaction, in retrospect, was the behavior of farmers. While 73.2 percent of the farmers opposed the High School, they were much less hostile as a group after we controlled for the effects of their socio-economic characteristics (especially, I suspect, their geographic location). Thus, while farmers were hostile to the High School, it was less a function of their particular position in the occupation structure than the type of other factors associated with farming.

The two occupational groups which continued to be the most hostile to a public high school were the shoemakers and the fishermen and mariners. Over seventy percent of the individuals in these occupations opposed the High School and controlling for their other socio-economic factors did not reduce that figure very much. This is not surprising since Katz and others have already emphasized that workers saw little benefit from the High School compared to those in higher socio-economic groups. It is interesting, however, to note that 25-30 percent of the workers supported the High School--thus suggesting that this was not an issue that pitted workers against capitalists (especially since such a significant proportion of merchants and manufacturers also voted against the High School). Furthermore, while Katz emphasizes the vote of the shoe workers against the High School as a means of their protesting the nature of industrial development in Beverly, the fishermen and mariners were just as opposed to the High School though presumably they were less upset and affected by industrial development and the shoe strike of 1860

than the shoemakers. Thus, while the differences in voting behavior by occupation are quite real and persisted after we controlled for the other variables, it was not as strong as one might have expected--the occupation of the voter was the fourth best predictor of the six independent variables. Furthermore, though there were differences between the workers and the capitalists in Beverly, as suggested by Katz, they were not so uniform as to encourage us to see this issue as an example of class conflict in the community--especially since most taxpayers of that community had opposed the high school in the first place.

Another potentially important factor in accounting for the voting behavior of Beverly citizens was the amount of taxable wealth they held. Using information from the Beverly tax list of 1859, it was possible to estimate the total wealth of the individual in terms of their personal and real estate.

Predicting the direction of the vote to abolish the High School as a function of the wealth of the voter is not obvious from a conceptual perspective. Based on the data, Katz argued that the wealthier individuals in the community supported the High School in order to benefit their own children as well as to stabilize the community. On the other hand, one might have speculated that the wealthier individuals, after controlling for the effects of the other factors, might have opposed the High School since they would end up paying most of the taxes for this institution while many of them could easily afford to send their own children to a private academy.

The results indicate that there was a direct relationship between the total wealth of the voter and the likelihood that he supported the High School--the more wealth an individual possessed, the more likely he was to vote for the High School. Furthermore, wealth was the second best predictor of voting behavior on the High School. Thus, for whatever reasons, those in Beverly who were most likely to pay for the High School through increased taxes were also its strongest supporters--though again that relationship was by no means exact since over a quarter of those with personal and real estate valued at more than $5000 also opposed the High School.

The presence of children in the household might affect the way an individual voted on the High School. Presumably, voters with children in the

household would be more apt to support the High School since they might want to make use of that facility for their own children in the future. Indeed, the MCA supports this hypothesis--voters from households with some children in them were more likely to vote for the High School. On the other hand, the presence of children in a household was not a strong predictor of how an individual voted on the High School.

The final variable we considered was the school district in which the voter lived. Due to the small number of voters from the smaller districts, it was necessary to combine Bald Hill, East Farms, and West Farms into one category and Bass River, Dodge's Row, and Washington into another. The Cove, Grammar, and South Districts were maintained as separate categories.

The school district in which the voter lived was by far the single best predictor of a voter's position on the High School--whether taken by itself or when included in the MCA with the other five independent variables. Voters in the two largest and most centrally located districts (in terms of population density), the Grammar and the South, were almost evenly split on the High School while those in the other three areas were overwhelmingly opposed to the High School. Especially hostile were the outlying areas of the Cove and the Bald Hill, East Farms, and West Farms areas.

The hostility of the smaller, outlying school districts to the High School is not surprising in view of the earlier discussions of the sectional tensions among the school districts in that community. What is surprising is that Katz, using exactly the same set of data, did not even include the geographic differences as one of his three major predictors of voting behavior on the High School.

Though the geographic division on the vote for the High School reflected to some degree disagreements over where the High School should be located, this was not a major consideration. Otherwise, the Bald Hill, East Farms, and West Farms voters should have endorsed the High School in larger numbers since the present High School was located in the West Farms District and the voters had again rejected any effort to move it to a more central location. Instead, the nearly unanimous opposition to the High School from the outlying dsitricts reflected their belief that the tax dollars could be better spent

on improving their common schools rather than supporting a public high school which served so few students and their bitter anger against the small minority of educational promoters in Beverly who were seeking to impose their wishes for a more centralized and more hierarichal school system on everyone else by bringing an indictment against the town.

Thus, though the voters of Beverly rejected their Public High School on March 14, 1860, the causes of their action are much more complicated than initially suggested by Katz. They did not reject popular education since they had steadily increased their support for common schools throughout this period. Nor did the social elite of the community build the High School for the benefit of their own children since most Beverly citizens had opposed it all along. Instead, a small, but effective, group of educational promoters, using the state law which required towns to build high schools, tried to force the taxpayers of Beverly to build a public high school. Though they succeeded, the bitterness this engendered as well as the continuing reluctance of Beverly citizens to fund an expensive and seldom used high school led to its downfall on March 14, 1860. However, under the continuing pressure of the state law and the efforts of the educational promoters, the town once again re-established the High School in March 1861. While the struggle over the Beverly High School does not reveal the type and depth of class tensions suggested by Katz, it does point to the complex efforts of communities to expand their offering of public education not only at the level of the common schools, but also at the level of high schools.

Footnotes

[1] Michael B. Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

[2] The book is widely cited and used by educational historians today--especially by those with a new left orientation. For example, see Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life (New York, 1976), pp. 155-156.

[3] Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, p. 19.

[4] Diane Ravitch, The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools (New York, 1977).

[5] Katz's interpretation of the Beverly vote is still routinely accepted by most educational historians. For example, see Alexander James Field, "Economic and Demographic Determinants of Educational Commitment: Massachusetts, 1855," Journal of Economic History, 39, No. 2 (June 1979), 439-458.

[6] Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts (Cambridge, England, 1980), pp. 208-232.

[7] Field, "Economic and Demographic Determinants of Educational Commitment."

[8] Kaestle and Vinovskis, Education and Social Change, p. 232.

[9] Bowles and Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America, p. 154.

[10] Kaestle and Vinovskis, Education and Social Change, pp. 246-247.

[11] Ibid., pp. 9-27.

[12] Ibid., p. 335.

[13] Albert Fishlow, "The American Common School Revival: Fact or Fancy?" in Industrialization in Two Systems, ed. Henry Rosovsky (New York, 1966), pp. 40-67.

[14] On the problems of the quality of educational data, see Kaestle and Vinovskis, Education and Social Change, pp. 292-302.

[15] Ibid., pp. 46-71.

[16] Since the data on the length of the public school year for 1859-60 for Beverly seemed erratic, the information for 1858-59 was used instead.

[17] The data on the length of the public school year for Salem for 1839-40 was an anomoly--therefore the information from 1840-41 was used instead.

[18] For the data on school expenditures, the information from the published annual Massachusetts Board of Education Reports were used. These figures underestimate the actual costs of public education since they do not include the cost of constructing or renting school buildings.

[19] This entire issue is complicated by the fact that there is a switch from male to female school teachers during these. In the forthcoming work on this topic, the shift toward female education will be greatly expanded.

[20] The early manuscript reports can be found in the Massachusetts State Library in the State House in Boston.

[21] The information on school expenditures by district in Beverly can be found in the published annual Auditor Reports of Beverly.

[22] Expenses of the Town of Beverly From March 1843 to March 1844, p. 8.

[23] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 4, 1844. These records are located in the Clerk's Offoce in the Beverly City Hall.

[24] Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, pp. 23-27.

[25] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 4, 1844.

[26] Ibid.

[27] On the Beverly Academy, see Edwin M. Stone, History of Beverly From Its Settlement in 1630 to 1842 (Boston, 1843), pp. 118-119.

[28] See manuscript Beverly School Reports in the Massachusetts State Library.

[29] Beverly School Report for 1852-53.

[30] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 14, 1853.

[31] Beverly School Report for 1853-54.

[32] It is not clear from the existing records exactly why the Beverly Academy was closed in 1854.

[33] Beverly Citizen, February 9, 1854.

[34] Ibid., March 4, 1854.

[35] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 13, 1854.

[36] Beverly Town Meeting Records for April 3, 1854.

[37] Beverly Citizen, April 9, 1853; April 16, 1853.

[38] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 13, 1854.

[39] Beverly Citizen, March 4, 1854.

[40] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 2, 1855.

[41] Beverly School Report for 1856-57.

[42] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 10, 1856.

[43] Ibid., April 7, 1856.

[44] Ibid., December 1, 1856.

[45] Ibid., March 10, 1857.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., July 11, 1857.

[48] Ibid., July 6, 1857.

[49] Ibid., September 15, 1857.

[50] Ibid., October 18, 1857.

[51] Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, p. 26.

[52] Beverly School Report for 1858-59.

[53] Beverly Town Meeting Records for October 18, 1857.

[54] Beverly School Report for 1858-59.

[55] Ibid.

[56] The Auditors' Eighteenth Annual Report of the Town of Beverly, 1858-59.

[57] Based on an analysis of town expenditures from 1840 to 1860.

[58] Beverly School Report for 1856-57.

[59] Ibid., 1858-59.

[60] Ibid., 1859-60.

[61] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 1858.

[62] Ibid., March 12, 1860.

[63] Beverly Citizen, March 3, 1860.

[64] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 12, 1860.

[65] Ibid., March 14, 1860.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., March 1861.

[69] Beverly Citizen, March 16, 1861.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 12, 1860.

[72] Ibid., April 1861.

[73] Frederick A. Ober, "Beverly," in History of Essex County, Massachusetts, ed. D. Hamilton Hurd (Philadelphia, 1888), I, p. 739.

[74] Katz used the tax records for 1860. These however, could not be located in the Beverly City Hall due to the disorganized condition of its tax records. Therefore, the 1859 data was used instead.

[75] Considerable effort was made to link the data so that while Katz matched records of 343 of the 392 voters, my efforts increased the linkage to 370 of the 392 voters.

[76] Beverly Town Meeting Records for March 14, 1860.

[77] Calculared from the 1859 tax data and the records of the vote on the High School.

[78] Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, pp. 19-20, 272-279.

[79] For a description of multiple classification analysis, see Frank M. Andrews, J.N. Morgan, John A. Sonquist, and Laura Klem, Multiple Classification Analysis (2nd. ed.; Ann Arbor, 1973).

[80] Katz, Irony of Early School Reform, p. 85.

COMMUNITY STUDIES IN URBAN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY: SOME METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL OBSERVATIONS*

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Comments delivered at the "Conference on Community Studies in Urban Educational History," Teachers College/Columbia University, New York, December 1979

* I am indebted to NIE Grant G79-0107 for providing me with the time to prepare these remarks. Naturally, NIE is in no way responsible for the views expressed here.

I realize that this is the last comment and therefore I will try to be as brief as possible. I am going to try to provide a social science reaction to the papers presented today and expand on many of the fine remarks of Professor Jackson. In my comments I will focus on three broad topics--research design, statistical techniques, and conceptual issues. In the area of research design, I will discuss the definition of a community, the number of communities studies, the type of communities studies, the context of the communities being investigated, and the method of analysis within communities. In talking about statistical problems, I will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of using cross-sectional data, the problems of small sample size, and the use of multivariate analyses. Finally, on the topic of conceptual issues, I will consider the ethnocultural approach to politics, the use of life course analysis, and the interaction between quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of the past.

This conference is organized around the theme of "community studies in urban education." Though all of the papers fit within this broad rubric, it is often unclear exactly what is meant by the authors when they use the words "community" and "urban". Are they simply referring to the Bureau of the Census definition of urban? Or do they also imply a sense of community within those urban areas? By not specifying what one means by those terms, it is difficult for the reader to be sure of exactly what the authors are trying to say. Since Barbara Finkelstein has already gone into this matter in her earlier comments, I will not duplicate her efforts but merely reinforce her point that this is still a major shortcoming of most studies in urban and educational history.

Even if one can define a community or an urban area, we then need to decide which community or communities are to be investigated. The answer to this question, of course, depends on what we are trying to investigate. Unfortunately, most studies in urban or educational history have not paid very much attention to this problem. In fact, the concept of a "control"--which is such an integral part of the social sciences--has barely penetrated the historical profession. One cannot make casual statements about changes over time unless one has created a control. Let me illustrate this basic problem by reviewing recent developments within the field of urban history.

American urban history blossomed during the 1960s and 1970s by drawing upon the pioneering efforts of individuals such as Stephen Thernstrom . The field has been characterized by the study of a single community such as Newburyport, Springfield, or Omaha. On the basis of an individual community, urban historians are prone to talk about the effects of urbanization and industrialization on the lives of the people in those communities. But there is no valid way in which they can make such inferences from a case of one. You need variation before you can untangle the effects of different factors on the lives of individuals. You can get that variation by studying differences within a community or among communities, but you cannot obtain it by treating Newburyport or Hamilton as a whole. It is heartening to see that several of the papers at this conference have been built around an explicit comparison of different communities. Though for certain issues one might focus on a single community, generally the type of questions most urban and educational historians seek to answer will require a research design that includes variation among communities as well as variation within a community.

Even if a researcher has planned to include several communities in his or her analysis, it is still necessary to decide which ones to include. Many of us simply pick communities that are nearby or ones in which we have relatives with whom we can stay while doing the research. Though considerations such as these are legitimate to some degree, they should never dictate our ultimate research design. Instead, we need to ask ourselves what questions we are trying to answer and then select the communities appropriate for that that task. I am pleased that several of the papers at this conference have followed this procedure of site selection. For example, David Ment's study of school segregation started with New York City and then included two other communities that had different experiences with school desegregation. The question about his research design is, of course, whether New Haven and New Rochelle are appropriate comparisons in terms of other important factors such as population size and economic development. Would Chicago, Boston, or Philadelphia, for instance, have provided better controls? In any case, the important point is that we need to select the communities we study on the basis of their functional relationship to our overall research questions rather than

simply because of their convenience or intrinisic interest for us.

In this regard, urban and education history has been severely handicapped by the type of areas that have been investigated. Particularly lacking are any comparisons of rural and urban communities. How can we discuss urban development unless we know something about changes in the countryside? For example, Michael Katz's interesting analysis of the impact of urbanization and industrialization is fundamentally limited by focusing on only one community--Hamilton, Ontario. Unless he also investigates developments in the rest of Canadian society, how can he be sure that the changes in the lives of people in Hamilton are due to urban or industrial changes rather than to general developments in Canadian society? If Katz is interested in ascertaining the impact of industrial and urban development on Canadian life, he should have included at least one or two rural communities in the same region which might have served as appropriat controls. Similarly, Ted Hershberg's large-scale study of Philadelphia in the nineteenth century would be greatly improved with the addition of some rural communities for comparative purposes.

To illustrate the problems of looking only at urban or rural areas by themselves, one can turn to the field of American historical demography. One group of scholars is investigating the reasons for the decline in urban fertility while another group is considering the decline in rural fertility. What most of them have never considered is whether the declines in both the rural and urban areas can be explained by general changes in American society rather than the particular experiences of either rural or urban areas. Indeed, in my own studies of fertility decline in nineteenth-century America, I have found that the parallel decline in both rural and urban areas is a reflection of overall changes in American society rather than simply the product of the decreasing availability of farmland in rural areas or the growing cost of raising children in urban areas.

Sometimes, as in the case of declining fertility, rural and urban areas experience parallel developments; but often rural developments and urban ones may be quite different as in the case of nineteenth-century educational trends. As Carl Kaestle and I have recently argued, there are real differences in rural and urban education in nineteenth-century Massachusetts that have been generally

ignored by other scholars. As a result, I would suggest that the next time that someone organizes a conference on trends in urban education, they should include at least one or two papers comparing those trends in rural and urban areas.

Another serious shortcoming of most community studies in urban and education history is that they do not place them in context. Almost all of the community studies that have been done simply describe the socio-economic characteristics of their particular community without even trying to compare them to the other communities in that area. Thus, when Stephen Thernstrom analyzed Newburyport, he did not devote any effort to trace the socio-economic or demographic development of the rest of Essex County or of Massachusetts. Yet he argued that Newburyport was a rather typical community. A few years later, in his book on Boston, he changed his mind and maintained that Newburyport was not that typical after all. Thernstrom as well as most other scholars in these fields should try to place their particular community or communities in a broader setting. In a general sense this is relatively inexpensive since published state and federal censuses provide considerable comparative data that can be easily used. Unfortunately, there has been almost no impetus within either urban or education history to place community studies within their broader environment even when it appeared that the overall context might affect the functioning of that community.

When Carl Kaestle and I decided to do a study of nineteenth-century Massachusetts education, we first examined the education trends in the state as a whole. Then we analyzed educational data cross-sectionally for all communities in that state in 1840, 1860, and 1875. Finally, we looked at Essex County in greater detail and selected eight communities on the basis of their socio-economic and demographic structure for closer scrutiny. In those eight communities in 1860 and 1880, we drew samples of about 10,000 individuals in order to obtain more detailed information on school attendance. Thus, our entire project was designed from the beginning to allow us to study individual and community educational developments within the broadest possible context. In other words, I am arguing for a nested research design that permits us to place individuals within their environment. It is not enough to use two or three communities--though this would be a major step forward for most studies--

we must also place them within their proper context. Almost every one of the studies presented at this conference could benefit by having the authors place them within such a broader context--not only for the benefit of the readers, but also for their own understanding of their findings. Otherwise, we will literally end up with dozens of isolated case studies of educational developments in urban areas in much the same unfortunate way that urban history has developed.

Though many, if not most, of the questions raised by urban and education historians call for a comparative study of different communities, there are instances where one wants to focus on developments within a particular community. In this situation it is important that we consider neighborhood effects whenever possible. Ironically, most studies of communities treat them as homogeneous entities and draw random or systematic samples of individuals without trying to analyze the possible effects of living in a particular part of that community. Recently, scholars in the area of survey research have found that contextual variables are very important in understanding how individuals behave. Similarly, some historical work is pointing to the same need for contextual variables. For example, when Tamara Hareven and I studied individual-level fertility differentials in Boston in 1880, we discovered that the Irish in South Boston and in the South End behaved very differently even after controlling for the effects of the other variables. Political studies of nineteenth-century Americans also find that Germans living in predominantly German communities behave differently than those living in more heterogeneous communities. We simply must begin to test the possible importance of neighborhood effects on individuals whenever possible. Several of the papers in this conference have pursued this approach. Thus, David Angus's analysis of educational developments in Detroit tries to take neighborhoods into account when he analyzes the political battles over education in that community. But we will never make progress in this area until urban and education historians acknowledge that individuals may be strongly influenced not only by their own personal characteristics, but also by the type of neighborhood in which they live.

In general, we need to pay much more attention in our research designs to making sure that we are comparing the appropriate groups and settings in order to answer the questions we seek to answer. For example, Don Martin and William

Bickel compare the educational experiences of earlier immigrants with those of contemporary black children in Pittsburgh. This is a fascinating and useful undertaking, but it would have been even more appropriate to include a comparison of both immigrants and blacks in the early twentieth century as well. Time context might be very important so that the educational and occupational opportunities in Pittsburgh seventy years ago might be quite different than those today. Therefore, any conclusions reached about the experiences of earlier immigrants and contemporary blacks may be as much a reflection of the changed context of the Pittsburgh environment as it is of different attitudes toward and treatment of immigrants and blacks. Similarly, Marjorie Murphy's interesting paper on the origins of public elementary school teachers in Chicago is enhanced by her attempt to compare them to New York teachers. Yet one also needs to realize that part of that difference is regional and part may be a function of city size. In my own work on a comparison of Michigan and Massachusetts female school teachers in the ante-bellum period, I found strong rural-urban differences as well as regional differences. Therefore, the appropriate comparative framework for Murphy's analysis of Chicago teachers maybe should also include a mid-western rural and urban sample which would help us to untangle the interaction of these various factors.

In trying to design more effective projects, urban and education historians need to look more to experimental research designs. We need to match subjects along certain personal and family characteristics in order to introduce better controls in our analysis. For example, Paul Ringel's data could become one of our most important sources for the understanding of the effects of industrial education if he were able to create some appropriate controls. Thus, he might compare his data on the graduates of this program with those who entered it but did not graduate. Or even more interesting would be to follow the brothers and sisters who did not participate in this program in order to see what happened to them. In this research design, one would be able to control for the effects of family background in attempting to test the impact of industrial education. Historians need to design their projects to take advantage of the appropriate control groups in order to minimize background effects

in trying to ascertain the impact of the independent variables that are being tested.

So far we have concentrated on the research design of urban and education historians. Now let us briefly consider some of the statistical issues suggested by the papers at this conference. Much of the work in this field is based on cross-sectional data. That is, it is an analysis of the relationship between variables gathered at only one point in time. This type of analysis is frequently used, however, to make inferences about the relationship of the variables over time on the strong assumption that the cross-sectional data represent adequately changes over time. For example, Alexander Field has recently argued that common school reform was the result of commercial and industrial development. Using the length of the public school as his index of common school reform (which, incidentally, is not a good measure of Horace Mann's reform efforts), he employs multiple regression analysis to ascertain the relationship between the length of the public school year and the socio-economic characteristics of all Massachusetts towns in 1855. Though his cross-sectional analysis found a strong relationship between the length of the public school year and the commercial and industrial development of the town, it does not necessarily prove that the length of the public school year in Massachusetts was increasing the most in the more industrialized and commercial towns between 1837 and 1855. In fact, Carl Kaestle and I found that the length of the public school year was actually declining in the larger and economically more developed areas, but it was increasing in the relatively undeveloped rural communities during those years. Thus, the cross-sectional relationship in this particular situation gives us a very inaccurate picture of the trends in educational developments over time.

Similarly, one has to be careful in looking at any cross-sectional relationship if there is a possibility that some selective mechanism such as migration may affect the results. For example, John Rury's analysis of the relationship between urban development and female education needs to consider that young women usually moved to cities to work and thereby artificially decreased school enrollment rates for urban children while increased them for rural children who remained behind to attend school. In Essex County, Carl Kaestle and I discovered that young single women often moved to communities such as Lawrence to work

rather than to go to school there. As a result, the educational statistics for that community suggested that a much lower proportion of children attended school there than if we simply looked at the children who actually grew up in that community rather than moving to it during their teenage years.

The danger of having results distorted by selective migration is quite common when working with cross-sectional data. But the problems caused by selective migration are not equally severe in all instances. For example, when Frank Furstenberg, Ted Hershberg, and John Modell produced their pioneering article on the transitions in early adulthood in Philadelphia, they did not consider the possible distortions due to selective migration. Since they looked at the patterns of school attendance and labor force participation, this is a serious problem. If they had focused on the rates of childbearing, however, that distortion would have been much less significant because selective migration does not appear to affect marital fertility as much as school going. Even if one is unable to make an accurate estimate of the extent of the bias due to selective migration, one should at least be aware of the direction and of the possible magnitude of that bias in order to temper the inferences that are made from such cross-sectional data. Ideally, of course, rather than relying on cross-sectional estimates of life course events, we would like to follow the experiences of an actual cohort as they age. If longitudinal data are unavailable, as is so often the case, we can at least minimize some of the distortions due to cross-sectional analysis by constructing artificial cohorts based on several cross-sections of the population at different time periods. In the construction of the artificial cohorts, especially for small geographic areas, the possibility of distortions due to selective migration remain though we are more apt to be sensitive to them because we would detect the age-graded pattern of net migration in or out of that area.

Another statistical issue that we need to consider is the entire matter of sampling. Though historians have increasingly turned to sampling, they have usually done so without the benefit of any knowledge of sampling theory. For example, most of the studies done in urban or education history are based on random or systematic samples of census data. This is a good procedure generally, but in certain cases one might want to modify it in order to make certain particular segments of the population are adequately represented in the

sample. Thus, if one were doing a comparison of the Irish and the Germans in the Northeast in the nineteenth century, it might be necessary to employ a form of stratified sampling to insure enough Germans in the sample. We need to decide ahead of time what we are trying to test and then to design our sample in order to obtain adequate numbers for that purpose. Usually historians take a random or systematic sample of the population before even deciding which subgroups of the population are going to be of particular interest to them.

Besides worrying about obtaining the right number of subjects from our sampling, we also need to consider the impact of sampling error on our results. Particularly in the field of urban history, the question of sampling error has not been thoroughly acknowledged. Many of the important findings in urban history today could be the product of sampling error rather than of any genuine differences among the population. The samples drawn in much of the field of urban history are simply too small. For example, Peter Knights selected a sample of 385 people for each of his time periods in his investigation of ante-bellum Boston. Though the sampling error on the 385 individuals is already quite large, it becomes even larger when he further subdivides his population in order to do separate analyses on the foreign-born and native population. As a result, we cannot place much confidence in his conclusions unless they are reinterpreted in the light of the probable sampling error (and, of course, the problem of measurement error compounds the difficulties --especially for historical work where the measurement error is likely to be much higher than for studies of contemporary issues).

Even those studies which escape the pitfalls of a too small sample size may suffer from an improperly designed sampling procedure. Stephen Thernstrom's analysis of social mobility in Boston is badly marred by the fact that his sampling procedure varied so greatly among the different time periods. Variations in the populations sampled might well account for much of the trends found by Thernstrom. Consequently, much of the first-generation results in urban history will have to be dismissed because of the faulty way in which the samples were drawn.

Some historians try to avoid all of these sampling problems by working

only with total populations. Though one is usually very glad to be able to work with total populations rather than samples due to the absence of sampling errors, it is usually not a judicious choice from an economic perspective if you are dealing with a large population. Furthermore, even in the case of total populations, one has to be careful that too much inference is not made on the basis of very small numbers. Too many historians have made very strong statements on the basis of five or ten individuals when there is reason to suspect that the results may be sufficiently unstable that a large population might have yielded rather different results.

Though most of the conference papers have been rather careful in their handling of sampling, a few might exercise appropriate caution due to the small number of individuals in their sample after they have subdivided the population into quite distinct categories. In those instances it would be very helpful for the authors to warn the readers of the dangers of drawing too strong inferences on the basis of such limited samples. Unfortunately, most readers tend to accept the validity of almost any numbers placed before them without asking whether the samples are too small to warrant the conclusions they seek to attach to these data.

Once the issue of sampling has been resolved, it is still necessary to decide what statistical techniques should be employed. Until very recently, most historians have been content to rely merely on a cross-tabulation of the data or on the use of simple correlation analysis. The trend now, however, is to employ multivariate techniques such as multiple regression analysis or multiple classification analysis. In general this has been a welcome and a necessary shift, but there have been some anomolies along the way. For example, in a very strange and heated exchange of letters in the History of Education Quarterly, some historians were actually arguing for the merits of cross-tabulation over multivariate analysis (the entire issue was confused by the fact that the multivariate analysis was not presented as clearly as it should have been). Though the individuals in question have since changed their minds on the value of multivariate analysis, the publication of this debate in a prominent historical journal is testimony to the growing pains of all of us in the history profession as we move from the more simple descriptive statistics to the more

complicated multivariate techniques.

The advantages of multivariate analysis become more obvious when we are dealing with complex issues. For instance, I am currently doing an analysis of the politics of abortion in the U.S. Congress during the 1970s. Though one might suspect that party affiliation is an important predictor of how U.S. Representatives vote on abortion since 73.6 percent of Republicans but only 43.9 percent of the Democrats voted for the Hyde Amendment (to cut off federal funds for abortions) in June 1976, that apparent difference disappeared entirely once we controlled for the impact of the other variables--especially the voting pattern of the Representatives on other issues and their religious affiliation. Thus, multivariate analysis can help us to detect which variables are really good predictors even after taking into consideration other factors and which ones only seem to be good predictors but diminish in importance once we control for the other variables.

Another illustration of the importance of multivariate analysis is provided by the debate on the nature of worker opposition to the Beverly High School on the eve of the Civil War. Michael Katz's pioneering analysis of the imposition of school reforms was heavily based on an intensive analysis of the decision of Beverly citizens to abolish their newly created High School. Katz contended that the three major explanations for the abolishment of the High School were that people without children protested the raising of taxes, that the least affluent citizens felt that the high school would not benefit their children, and that the workers were hostile to the wealthy leaders of that newly industrializing community. Though Katz had considered the geographic variation in the voting as a possible explanation, he abandoned it in favor of these other three factors--probably because he assumed that the sectional differences only reflected the deeper social tensions within that community. My own reanalysis of the Beverly High School fight is producing very different results based on a more intensive reading of the primary materials as well as the use of multiple classification analysis. Rather than being mainly a struggle between those with children and those without them or a fight between the less affluent and more affluent members of that community, it appears that the sectional differences in Beverly were by far the best predictor of voting behavior on the

High School even after controlling for the other variables. The debate over the Beverly High School was in large part a sectional division within that community over where the High School should be located as well as whether it should have been built in the first place. In other words, more sophisticated statistical techniques can often provide us with a clearer picture of the relative strengths of our predictor variables than simple cross-tabulations of that same data.

On the one hand, I would like to encourage more people to use sophisticated multivariate techniques in their studies. On the other hand, I need to warn all of you of the dangers of trying simply to use multivariate techniques without really understanding what they mean. The problem is that today's computer technology makes it possible for anyone to do highly sophisticated analysis without even the most elemenatary understanding of the statistical assumptions underlying those procedures. Furthermore, the way in which many people publish the results of their multivariate analyses make it difficult if not impossible to evaluate the validity of their procedures.

An example of the statistical problems associated with an improper usuage of multivariate analysis is provided by the work of Colin Forster and G.S.L. Tucker. They wrote a book on the decline in white fertility ratios in the United States from 1800 to 1860 and concluded that the decreasing availability of farmland was the major reason for the decline in fertility. Their analysis is based on cross-sectional regression analysis at the state level and seemed perfectly respectable on the basis of their published tables. Since I was deeply involved in this debate and was highly suspicious of their results since they had not bothered to include such potentially important factors as the educational level of the population, I decided to rerun their data for 1850 and 1860 using more appropriate measures.

In the process of redoing Forster and Tucker's regression analysis, I unexpectedly discovered all sorts of difficulties in their statistical assumptions. For example, it turned out that their measures of urbanization and farm development were so highly correlated that their regression equations suffered from multicollinearity. Furthermore, the number of cases they had in their analyses were so small that the presence of any unusual values could greatly distort

their findings. Indeed this occurred because they had included the Dakota Territory in their analysis which had a very high sex ratio since it was mainly an army garrison of all white males. Once these statistical problems were ironed out as well as some conceptual improvements made, the results came out almost the opposite of their findings--the availability of farmland was no longer the powerful predictor of white fertility differentials that they had found. In other words, multivariate analysis is no panacea--it needs the same kind of careful and thoughtful usuage that we ordinarily assume is a normal part of any analysis. We cannot and should not simply rush out to do multivariate analyses simply because they are fashionable or even desirable unless we understand some of the basic assumptions underlying them.

Some of these statistical reservations might apply to the studies presented at this conference. The authors should, for example, double-check their data to make sure that outlining values do not distort their findings--especially if they are using a very small number of cases. This becomes all the more important because some of the studies with a very limited number of cases are further broken down by regions or some other subgroups so that the final N's in some of their runs become dangerously small.

By now many of you are probably wondering if historians are unusually inept in handling statistics. Let me assure you that though historians probably do trail the other social sciences in the use of sophisticated statistical techniques, we are by no means alone. In fact, I would argue that the entire field of education itself is particularly weak in the use of statistical analysis. For example, the Educational Testing Service recently completed an indepth analysis of three departments (psychology, chemistry, and history) in twenty-five universities and colleges throughout the United States. One of the issues they dealt with was the relationship between the quality of research and the quality of teaching in those institutions. They came up with a very startling conclusion--that there was no relationship between the quality of teaching and the quality of research. This finding was quickly disseminated throughout the academic community through the Chronicle of Higher Education as well as in numerous presentations at various academic gatherings including the American Historical Association. Everyone accepted their findings as correct; but no one bothered to look closely at their actual analysis. The results were based

on twenty-five cases and there were indications that one or two of these were outliers which may have been responsible for shifting the regression line to indicate that there was no relationship between teaching and research quality. Since the returns from the universities and colleges were often of quite unequal completeness, they should have investigated this matter in more detail to make sure that the outlying cases were not simply the result of incomplete returns or peculiar to certain types of institutions. In other words, when you have only twenty-five cases, you need to look at each of them very carefully (and not just the outliers) in order to make sure that the inferences one makes from these data are justified. Part of the reason that the history of education has not been much more sophisticated in its use of statistical materials is that its two parent groups--history and education departments--have not been particularly concerned or aware of these issues in their own day-to-day undertakings until quite recently.

Finally, let us turn to my last general topic--conceptualization. Many people confuse the use of quantitative materials with a social science approach. But social science is not simply the use of numbers--it is the conceptualization and testing of hypotheses. Too often urban and education historians have devoted tremendous amounts of time and energy on data gathering and analysis without adequately trying to conceptualize the issues they want to investigate.

One of the weaknesses of the recent efforts by urban and education historians is that they often undertake interdisciplinary topics without really trying to understand what scholars in the other disciplines are doing. For example, education historians have debated at great length the politics of early school reforms without trying to relate their work to similar efforts done by political scientists and political historians. In fact, the amazing thing is that so much of education history is focused on politics, yet scholars in this area rarely investigate these issues directly. Thus, Alexander Field studies indirectly the support for Horace Mann's reforms by analyzing the determinants of the length of the public school year rather than trying to investigate more directly, as Carl Kaestle and I have just done, the support for Mann's efforts among the legislators who were called upon to enact his measures. Furthermore, many of the recent studies of the politics of common school reform almost totally neglect the important political and religious controversies which provided the setting

within which these educational battles were fought. In our analysis of mid-nineteenth-century educational politics at the legislative level, Carl Kaestle and I found that the best predictor of support or opposition to Horace Mann's reforms was a member's political affiliation--something which most education historians have almost totally neglected. Massachusetts Democrats, unlike most of their Whig counterparts, feared Horace Mann's reforms because of their greater fear of any centralized power within the state even if there was no concrete evidence that the power was currently being misused in any way. In other words, to comprehend the battles over Horace Mann's reforms, we need to consider the political climate and debates within that state on other issues besides educational reforms. Historians of education cannot afford a parochial approach to the study of politics--we must reintegrate ourselves with the other disciplines in trying to explain nineteenth-century social reforms.

Several papers at this conference reveal a new willingness to look at the political battles over educational development from a fresh perspective. Particularly interesting are the efforts of David Angus to explore the antebellum Detroit school wars by considering whether an ethnocultural approach, first developed by political historians, may not provide us with a better framework for analysis than the predominant class conflict model most educational historians still employ. What is exciting about Angus's paper is that he tries to see whether a broader and a more cultural approach to the study of conflicts over schooling may not be more appropriate. Yet one must also be careful that as we borrow from other scholars that we are fully aware of the shortcomings of their approaches as well as their strengths. Thus, while the ethnocultural approach to the study of politics is very reasonable in a general sense, it has often been flawed in practice. The definitions of most political historians of pietism and ritualism, for instance, has been quite crude and misleading. Similarly, the use of statistics to test the ethnocultural approach to the study of politics in the past has been less than satisfactory. Nevertheless, I predict that the next generation of education historians, drawing upon some of the better aspects of the new political history, will develop a broader approach to the study of the politics of education than has been achieved so far.

Another example of where urban and education historians should spend more time on conceptualization is in the development of occupational indices. Most of the papers at this conference which categorize occupations simply adopt one of the commonly used divisions such as the ones by Stephen Thernstrom or Michael Katz. Yet most of the authors are not sufficiently concerned about the validity of these occupational scales. Even urban historians, who often have been negligent of other methodological and conceptual problems, are more sensitive to the difficulties of using these occupational scales than are education historians. For example, the relationship between white collar and blue collar workers in 1840 is not necessarily the same as in 1860. While many northern female school teachers left the classroom in the 1840s to seek employment in textile mills, the situation had changed dramatically by 1860 when working conditions in the mills had deteriorated while those for school teachers had improved--at least relatively. Similarly, there is a major change during these years in the economic and social status of shoe workers as mechanization begins to downgrade skill requirements in that industry after the 1850s. As a result, it is difficult to investigate shifts in occupational mobility over time by using the static categories that have been developed. This is a serious problem that has not been satisfactorily resolved; I do not expect that education historians should suspend their work until they or someone else settle these issues (especially since I suspect that some of these problems will not lend themselves to any simple solutions), but I do think that education historians should at least acknowledge the seriousness of the problem and speculate on this might affect their overall conclusions. In studies where the occupational categorization of the population is only a secondary issue, this may not be of such critical importance; but in those studies in which occupational scaling is of primary interest, as in several of the papers at this conference, it is utmost importance that the authors deal directly and openly with the reliability of the occupational scales they have adopted.

The second point that needs to be made in regard to labor force participation is that we must get away from the simplistic reliance on using only the occupation of the head of the household to categorize a family's economic

situation. We need to develop some ways of summarizing the relative economic situation of each family which takes into account the ages, sex, and occupation of all the members and not just that of the head of the household. In an essay on the labor force participation of women in Essex County in 1880 with Karen Mason and Tamara Hareven, we tried to develop a family work/consumption index to supplement the economic information we have based only on the occupation of head of the household. Though we are not satisfied with the final form of our work/consumption index and encourage others to improve upon it, I would argue that the construction of it is going in the right direction conceptually and that several of the papers presented at this conference might benefit by trying to develop their own economic analyses along these lines.

As we try to develop ways of studying the lives of individuals within the context of their families and their communities, we will need a broader framework than that of the life cycle of individuals. Some scholars have suggested the need for family stages, but this is a too limited view of family life. Instead, I would suggest that urban and education historians should look at the new developments in the area of life course (or life span) analysis in psychology and sociology for guidance. In fact, several family historians have already begun to incorporate these concepts in their own research in a way that ties in very nicely with the transitions that historians of education are likely to focus on such as school entering or school leaving. Rather than simply replicating the current studies on school attendance, education historians need to rethink this issue from a life course perspective in order to be able to analyze school going from a more dynamic perspective.

As my final illustration of the need for a better conceptualization of the issues, I want to draw your attention to the opportunities for integrating behavioral and intellectual or cultural approaches to the past. Too many historians have been engaged in a fruitless debate on whether we should focus on the way people actually behaved in the past or on the way in which they perceived their lives and environment. In fact, I would argue that the most exciting and challenging areas for future research will be those which try to incorporate elements of both behavioral and attitudinal approaches to the past rather than focusing on either one of these by themselves.

Particularly interesting are the areas where people's perceptions of something does not match the reality of it within their society. For example, I found that though most adult colonial New Englanders felt that they were likely to die at any moment, their chances of survival, especially in the rural areas, were actually quite high. The problem then is to explain why individuals misperceive their own reality and how this misperception affects the way they order their lives.

In the area of educational development, there has been a great deal of concern lately about the adverse effects of adolescent childbearing--especially on the educational attainment of the mother and her future opportunities in the labor force. The problem of adolescent pregrancy has commonly been referred to by both the news media and public officials as an "unprecedented epidemic" which requires immediate and drastic action. Yet my own work on the politics of adolescent pregnancy in the U.S. Congress suggests that the rate of teenage childbearing peaked in 1957--over twenty years ago. Furthermore, there has been a steady decline in adolescent childbearing during the 1960s and 1970s. Yet the U.S. Congress passed a hastily written and poorly designed Adolescent Health Services and Pregnancy Prevention Act in 1978 because of its mispreception of the nature of the problem of adolescent pregnancy today. Again, the challenging issue will be to study the interaction between the rates of adolescent pregnancy and our perceptions of them in order to understand how our culture has reacted to young people today.

Despite my resolve to be brief, I can see that I have already exceeded my allotted time and your patience in making my comments on the state of research in this broad area. I would simply like to close by congratulating the authors of the papers presented at this conference on doing a fine job and providing us with some new insights and new directions in understanding educational developments in urban America. Though my comments have been focused on the methodological and conceptual problems in the area of urban and education history, I am confident that these issues will be satisfactorily resolved as the next generation of scholars tackle many of the problems that we are all still trying to deal with in our own work.